

# NOTE

## ON

# LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

## IN THE

# BOMBAY PRESIDENCY.

BY

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'Englishmen in India have less opportunity than might be expected of forming opinions of Native character \* \* \* It might be urged in opposition to many unfavorable testimonies that those who have known the Indians longest have always the best opinion of them'—*Monsieur de la Harpe*

I can recollect, and I do it with shame, the period when I thought I was superior to those with whom my duties made me associate, but as my knowledge of them and of myself improved, the distance between us gradually lessened. I have seen and heard much of our boasted advantages over them, but cannot think that if all the ranks of the different communities of Europe and India are comparatively viewed, there is just reason for any very arrogant feeling on the part of the inhabitants of the former, nor can I join in that common place opinion which condemns, in a sweeping way, the natives of this country as men, taking the best of them, not only unworthy of trust and devoid of principle, but of too limited intelligence and reach of thought to allow of Europeans with large and liberal minds and education having rational or satisfactory intercourse with them'

—*Sir John Malcolm.*

"Self is the witness of Self Self is the refuge of Self Do not despise thy own Self, the highest witness of men"—*Mahabharat, VIII, 85*

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# NOTE ON LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

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1 At the request of the Committee, I have much pleasure in putting down on paper my views on *Lord Ripon's scheme of Local Self Government in India*

2 The Government of Bombay, in their Resolution No 3583, dated the 19th September last, have published their views as to what extent and in what manner they are prepared to give effect to the principles and policy enunciated by the Government of India in their Resolution of the 18th May, 1882

It appears that the steps taken by the Bombay Government differ from the course adopted by the Government of Bengal. The first step which the Lieut Governor of Bengal takes on receipt of the Government of India's Resolution is to record his own views of the scheme, and to promulgate them by means of a circular letter addressed to the Commissioners of Divisions. In this expression of views His Honor cheerfully adopts the main principles of the Government of India's proposals, and invites the opinions of the Commissioners of Divisions in regard to matters of detail. The Hon Mr Rivers Thomson does not, however, stop here. Having given the officials under him the benefit of his own opinions, His Honor undertakes a tour through some of the important districts of his Presidency to ascertain by a personal interview with officials and leading citizens in the districts, what may be done to carry out the policy of the Government of India. The Lieut-Governor of the Panjab likewise announces in a Resolution what His Honor thinks of the proposals of the Supreme Government, and circulates the same for the guidance of the executive officers in his districts. Sir Charles Aitchison takes a most enlightened and hopeful view of the proposals, and seconds them with a zeal and liberality worthy of the position he occupies as the most successful among the present class of 'competition wallas' in India.

3 The Government of Bombay think fit to adopt an entirely different course. They first invite their district officers to offer opinions on the Supreme Government's scheme, and, on receipt of these opinions, record a Resolution which expresses the official view of the matter. The spirit of their Resolution runs counter to the principles, policy, and wishes of the Government of India. It does not appear that the opinions of judicial officers, who, as disinterested spectators of the work of local boards in their respective districts, may be expected to offer an unbiassed view of the question, were consulted. Nor does the Resolution of our Government contain any thing to show that non official members of local boards or leading natives, either in Bombay or in the mofussil, were asked to give their opinions, though

the Government of India had suggested that this course might be followed, with a view to make the scheme 'as consonant as possible to the feelings and "habits of the people" By their Resolution of the 16th June, the Bombay Government, in compliance with the requisition of the Government of India, directed that the various District Local Fund Committees should be invited to give their opinions on the working of the system now in force under which Local Fund works are at present carried on in this Presidency, and to submit any suggestions on the subject which they may deem useful and, further, that the replies, with the remarks of the local Government thereon, should be forwarded for the information of the Government of India. It was very much to be desired that the course here suggested had been adopted, and that the Resolution of the Bombay Government, dated the 19th September, 1882, had, before publication taken due note of the views recorded in the replies of these Local Fund Committees and the results of their references to leading natives in the districts, or at the Presidency. Other Provincial Governments, notably those of Beogal\* and Madras, have followed this plan with considerable advantage to themselves. The same course might well have commended itself to the Bombay Government. It would have left no room for doubt or misconception on the part of the public as to the desire of the Government to be possessed of all shades of opinion, and would have been especially valuable for this, if for no other, reason that it would have removed the suspicion that the executive officers, of whose opinions generally the Resolution of the Bombay Government is the embodiment, and who are the very gentlemen who, under the practical operation of Lord Ripon's scheme, have to transfer their powers of control to the representatives of the people, are reluctant to give up powers they have so long enjoyed. At all events the Government of Bombay would have lost nothing by taking the non official members of local boards and some intelligent members of the native community into confidence †

4 Even if the opinions of the local committees were obtained, it would, it seems to me, be difficult to attach much value to them. The fact that they are the opinions of a body of men who have hitherto looked to the Collector for

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\* It will, of course be understood that the conduct of the inquiries should not be limited to official agency. The persons mainly concerned are the people themselves and there should be no difficulty by public meetings or by personal consideration with the residents in each municipality of "ascertaining the wishes of those chiefly interested. —*Para 5 of the letter dated the 5th July 1882 from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal to all Commissioners of Divisions*

I am to ask that you will take immediate steps to consult the officers subordinate to you and as many Native gentlemen as you can, on the questions discussed in this letter and its enclosures. —*See concluding para (16) of the same letter*

† In the Resolution of the 9th October last, the Bombay Government endeavoured to clear up the misapprehensions of the Government of India on this subject, and remark that they had lost no opportunity of eliciting the opinions of Native gentlemen whom they considered competent to give advice and offer suggestions on the subject. It is not clear however whether the Native gentlemen thus consulted were officials of Government or non-officials what was their number and the nature of the opinions they gave

their domination, and who have been in the habit of expressing their views less from a sense of the intrinsic merits of the questions before them than from a regard as to how far their views will please or displease the Collector—this fact, I say, would appear to detract much from the value of their opinions

5 Another fact worthy of note is that as yet the Supreme Government's scheme of Local Self Government has hardly been made intelligible to the mass of the people through the regular official channels, by means of translations of the Resolution of the 18th May last into the current vernaculars of this Presidency, and their circulation throughout the villages and towns in the interior of each district. No doubt much service in this respect has been done by the leading Anglo Indian and Vernacular newspapers at the Presidency and in the principal cities and towns in the districts, to diffuse information on the subject as widely as possible. The efforts of Native Associations in sending agents into different parts of their districts to explain the intentions of the Government of India have also done much to give a general idea as to the wishes of the Supreme Government, but it is desirable that such efforts should be supplementary to, or supplemented by, an authoritative promulgation of the views of the Supreme Government through the vernaculars to correct any vague or erroneous conceptions in the popular mind. In connection with this subject, therefore, I cannot too warmly approve of the mode adopted by this Committee to give the main points of the Government of India's Resolution in the form of a few simple propositions in popular Gujarati intelligible to the commonest understanding, and print some thousands of copies in large, bold type and circulate them in the form of placards, to be pasted on the walls of the village *choories*, or other conspicuous parts of every village or township, not excluding even the remote parts of Gujarat.

6 The object of this Note is (1) to endeavour to fill up, in a measure, the gap left by the Government of Bombay, (2) to view the proposals of the Government of India from a non official standpoint, (3) to show how far the position taken up by the Bombay Government, in regard to many of the proposals of the Supreme Government, involves injustice to the people of Western India, (4) to point out in what respects some of the proposals of the local Government are unfair in principle, and are likely to be found unworkable in practice, unless materially modified to suit the condition and circumstances of each district, and (5) generally to consider the whole scheme from a practical business like point of view.

7 There is but one opinion among all intelligent classes of the entire community throughout the Bombay Presidency, and, I should say, throughout India, as to the wisdom, the sagacity, and the statesmanship which mark every step of the policy announced in the Government of India's Resolution. That Resolution is worthy of the broad and catholic spirit which breathes through all measures of Lord Ripon's Government, and affords one of the many proofs of that genuine desire to

promote the welfare of the people of India, which has won for Lord Ripon and his colleagues in the Government of India the heartfelt gratitude of a grateful nation. The whole scheme of the extension of Local Self Government is singularly generous. It shows what eminent British statesmanship, nobly conceived and nobly acted upon, can achieve to counteract the disadvantages inseparable from a foreign rule. The proposals which the scheme embraces are by no means visionary, new, or incompatible with the traditional policy of the Government of India. They are only a step in advance of the decentralization policy of Lord Mayo. They declare that education, sanitation, medical charity, and local public works, which were heretofore under the virtual control of executive officers, should henceforward be placed, wherever it is possible, under the control of the representatives of the people who are taxed to support them. They give a reality of powers to what has hitherto been a mere shadow. They find what people have done under the direct guidance of executive officers; they wish to see what they can do when that control is removed from within and is to be exercised from without by these officers remaining aloof from direct participation in the work of Local Self Government. Thus the policy takes due note of the past progress of the country, and recognizes what is due to that progress. In spite of all that progress, it must be owned that what is called public life in England is a thing in India wholly unknown. Not that the qualities necessary for that public life are non-existent here. They simply lie dormant, and have to be called into activity. This can only be done by habituating the people to a course of public and political life. It is in this, it seems to me, that the chief merit of Lord Ripon's proposals lies.

8 The great object, then, is to create and develop a spirit of self help among the people. The Government of India have taken the Great object of the scheme of Local Self Government opportunity of the expiry of the five years provincial contracts to advance their decentralization policy a stage further, namely, from decentralization as between the imperial and provincial Governments to decentralization as between the provincial Governments and the local bodies within their jurisdiction. It is not expected that improvements in administration will, as a matter of course, follow this transfer of power from the paid to unpaid agency. The extension of Local Self Government is desired as "*an instrument of political and popular education*." The Government of India will not be surprised if, in some cases, the experiment should end in partial failures. Such failures, however, will perhaps be the best correctives for the future. The Government rightly makes light of the objection which rests on doubts as to the advancement of the people in general intelligence and public spirit. Proofs of such intelligence and public spirit are to be taken into account whenever and wherever they are found. The complaint of overwork in all departments of the state can only be met with economy to the state on the one hand and with advantage to the people on the other, by the Government availing itself though, perhaps, at the cost of some administrative efficiency at the

outset, of the unbought services of the people, and allowing them a larger share in the government of the country

9 As I said before, the Bengal Government have cheerfully seconded the Bengal Government's view proposals of the Government of India. Like his predecessor, Sir Ashley Eden, the Hon Mr Rivers Thomson "is anxious to give the fullest possible effect to the policy of the Government of India. He, too, is favourable to the elective system, for, on a comparison of the nomination system heretofore in force with the proposed elective system, he is of opinion that "this much at least is clear that, while under "elective system there may be some hope of progress in regard to general interest "in municipal affairs, there can hardly be any such prospect under a system of "simple nomination, and all the experience of past efforts would seem to show "that if little good has as yet been effected by election, certainly no harm has been "done by it." As to the policy of the Government of India regarding the election of non official chairmen of local boards, wherever this may be practicable, the opinion of the Lieut Governor of Bengal is of considerable value. If this policy of electing non official chairmen is to be carried out anywhere at all, it can be carried out in municipalities. "In the mofussil," His Honour observes, "the presence of the chief executive officers at the head of the board has very frequently the effect of discouraging the free expression of independent opinion, "and though this may be materially altered by the working of the elective system, "still there can be little doubt that the object of encouraging Local Self Government would be promoted by the removal of this overshadowing influence, sufficient power being retained to compel the Commissioners to discharge their "duty to the public should they persist in neglecting it."

10 The Resolution of the Lieut Governor of the Punjab is a masterly Punjab Government's state paper, and shows that Sir Charles Aitchison has fully identified himself with the Government of India's policy. His Honor considers that the advantages arising from the extension of Local Self Government can only be secured if local bodies are trusted. "Their power and their responsibilities," according to His Honor, "must alike be real, in proportion as there is any pretence or illusion about "either the one or the other, there is an obvious possibility that the whole "undertaking may degenerate into an officious dislocation of existing arrangements. No such lamentable miscarriage of a singularly generous and "enlightened policy must be suffered to occur in the Punjab. This risk escaped, "the Government, anticipating, by wise reforms, those legitimate aspirations "which always gain substance and strength with the progress of instruction and "civilization, and providing a career for the people, to open and expand with their "growing intelligence and education, will unquestionably avoid many of the "dangers inherent in a foreign rule. This is, in the Lieut Governor's own "opinion, the great merit of the new policy. Briefly, he thinks that the scheme,

\* See B. Local Government's Circular Letter, dated the 5th July 1887

Bombay District Municipal Act VI of 1873, and that very little, if at all, remains to be done by way of extension of Local Self Government. The constitution of local boards, urban and rural, has been popular, the non official element preponderates, representative *Indrads* have seats on Taluka and District Local Fund Committees. There are provisions in the District Municipal Act which empower Government to grant the elective franchise to City Municipalities, and of raising Town Municipalities to the status of City Municipalities when Government find that people show sufficient intelligence and sufficient public spirit. The wants of the people in respect of education, sanitation and water-supply have been met and remote districts have been opened by good roads. Thus, all that a paternal Government may be expected to do has been done in this Presidency. What more can the people want or desire? More extensive powers than those enjoyed at present it is not desirable to grant. "Such powers," we are told, "are often abused even in countries where the people have been accustomed to free institutions, the growth of centuries, and His Excellency the Governor in Council cannot but regard with uncertainty and anxiety the bestowal by one step of unlimited powers on communities so new to them exercise."

13 This is, to the main, the official view of the Bombay Government regarding

Non official view differ the proposals of the Government of India for the further extension of Local Self-Government. But this view is, I venture to affirm, at variance with the views of those non-officials who have taken part in the work of local boards, municipal and urban, and who have steadily watched the slow growth of this tender plant of political education. The non official view is, that the popularity of the present constitution of the Municipal and Local Fund Committees simply arises from the fact that it embodies the elements of a future popular representation, that, in its present actual working, the constitution leaves no scope to the non-officials for the free exercise of independence. Non-officials are undoubtedly in the majority in all local boards; but not having the right of bringing questions of their own motion before the boards, they are generally left to act a very insignificant part, while the weight of influence is all on the side of official members. The Municipal Act, indeed, empowers Government to grant the elective franchise to City Municipalities, but, as a matter of fact, not one out of the ten City Municipalities in the Bombay Presidency has had the elective franchise given to it, though the Act has been in force since 1874, and though some of these Municipalities have often prayed to Government for the concession. Except Sakhar, not one of the Town Municipalities out of 150 that exist in the Presidency has, during the last eight years, had the good fortune, until within the last few days, to be raised to the status of a City Municipality, though it is admitted that the inhabitants of many of them had shown intelligence and public spirit enough to entitle their Municipalities ere long to be so promoted. It is certainly due to the improvements which have been admittedly made during the last twenty years in

this Presidency, to the progress of education, to the growth of the people in intelligence and civilization, that they should emerge from their present infantile state and be made to stand on their own leg, to follow of their own motion the course which has hitherto been dictated to them. Time was when the presence and the guiding influence of the Collector was needed to overcome caste enmities and the conflicting influence of local factions. But if the people have made progress "in all that constitutes civilization" for which the Bombay Government give them credit, and, moreover, if that progress, on the Government's own showing, be such as is "hardly credible to those who can remember the state of this Presidency twenty years ago, is it too much to say that one result of that progress should be a demand on the part of the non-official member to be freed from the control of the officials and to be allowed to manage their own affairs independently of that control?" "An educated people," as Professor Wordsworth,\* one of the most able, liberal minded, and sound educationists on this side of India remarks, "will never submit to have no lot or part in the government of their own country. The diffusion of education in India is only intelligible and defensible if the foreign rulers are prepared to admit their subject to a large and increasing share in the government of the country." Surely one result of this progress should manifest itself in the direction of the diminution of caste enmities and of the conflicting influence of local factions. The existence of caste enmities and factions among members of certain local boards is not denied but these are gradually giving way under a higher sense of duty, and may be expected to be minimized under a sense of personal responsibility.

14 But, apart from the fact of the advance made in general education and the experience gained in Local Self Government during the last twenty years by the people of this Presidency, the question of the extension of Local Self Government has to be considered from a wider survey of facts. People in the Bengal Presidency are admitted by their Lieutenant Governor to be fit for the exercise of extended powers of Local Self Government. During the last twenty years the intelligence of the people of Bengal, we are assured by the Lieut. Governor, has not stood still. "And more than in other provinces, it may be claimed here that with the proofs of rapid advance in popular education and of the growth of a healthier public opinion, the time has come when the demand of the more intelligent classes for a large freedom in the management of their own concerns must be recognized and allowed. The desire of the Lieut. Governor is that Municipal Commissioners shall have as much scope as possible in the independent management of the affairs of their own towns." His Honor is thus prepared to give full effect to the proposals of the Government of India. Now it may be asked if the people of Bengal are pronounced to be ripe and fit for the further introduction among them of the measures of Local Self Government as proposed by the Government of India can it be said that the

If other parts of India are ripe for extended Local Self Government why not this Presidency?

\* Evidence before the Education Commission



Bombay Presidency is so far behind the Presidency of Bengal that it should not have the like advantages conferred upon it? What have the people in the Bombay Presidency done, or omitted to do, to keep them in the background of those of Bengal in the race for local self government? The trade of Bombay, internal and external, is as great as that of Bengal in volume. Her coast trade has outstripped that of Calcutta. Neither in point of education, enterprise, public spirit, and progress in all that constitutes civilization, can the people of this Presidency compare unfavourably with the people of Bengal. Unless the Government of Bombay can show, by hard and incontrovertible facts, that the people in the Bombay Presidency labour under certain positive disadvantages as compared with those of Bengal, it is difficult to see how the Government of India can withhold the advantages of extended local self government from Bombay, while conferring the like benefits on Bengal. In the absence of such strong proofs, I take it, that if Bengal is to have all the concessions made to her by Lord Ripon, Bombay cannot be left out in the cold. Again, if Bombay can stand a good comparison with Bengal, it is scarcely necessary to say, without any boast, that in point of general advancement, public spirit, keen interest in public questions, enterprise in commerce, management of free institutions and all which go to exhibit the characteristics of a progressive people, there can be no comparison between Bombay and the Panjab or the N.W. Provinces, or Madras, and yet, while the responsible rulers of Bengal, the N.W. Provinces, Madras and the Panjab show their full appreciation of the intentions of the Government of India and their readiness to give effect to them, the Government of Bombay responds in a grudging and hesitating spirit! There would have been some reason for the course pursued by the Bombay Government, if the past history of local self government in this Presidency warranted this extreme caution and hesitation in making the scheme of the Government of India as their own. But a short account of this history will show not only that there are no reasonable grounds for limiting the powers and action of local boards, but that, on the contrary, the Government of India, in proposing to free the boards from direct official control, are only taking up the thread of self government in this Presidency from the point in Sir Bartle Frere's scheme, from which 20 years of administration has failed to secure the desired ends.

### Local Funds

15 The idea of spending money on works of local utility, such as wells, tanks, dharmshalas, or rest houses, and planting trees to afford shade to the parched and weary traveller, is deeply rooted in the Hindu mind. It is associated with *punya*, or acts of religious merit. Such works are looked upon as charitable works, the construction of which is enjoined on the rich as well as on the kings, by the Hindu Shastras, as a sacred duty. The notion is as old as, or perhaps older than, the most ancient rocks which chronicle the construction of such works or the oldest archaeological remains. Every succeeding age of Indian

history has exemplified it. Such charitable work\* are purely local, and are constructed often by wealthy private individuals independently of the assistance or interference of the government of the time. Every part of India bears testimony to such voluntary local work\*. They did not cease to be constructed even during the period of the Mahomedan rule. On the contrary, the Mahomedan rulers of India encouraged such works on the part of the wealthy and the charitable, whether Hindu or Musalman, and, in many cases, followed their examples. Under the Maratha rule voluntary works of public usefulness by private individuals received perhaps very great encouragement, and we find at this day in all parts of India many solid works of olden times, showing uncommon engineering skill and workmanship. While they have stood the test of ages, gigantic works of modern construction, under trained agency, have either tumbled down or given way, as witness the scandals which now and then arise in connection with bridges, military barracks, and other works constructed through the agency of the Public Works Department. The well of charity has not yet dried up, and pious Hindus in all parts of India, even at this day, consider it one of the best uses of their money to devote it to works of public utility.

16 Under the British Government, till very lately, village Panchayets

Larn balances of Val-  
rent Funds still exist in  
every district in Gujarat.

secured funds, without any reference at all to Government, through either the heads of their respective castes, or, in towns, through the influence of the Malajan or trade guilds. Of late years, however, these two sources of charity, have, so far as the interior of the districts are concerned, been found to be failing, owing, it is believed, to increased calls on the people for tax,—imperial, provincial, local, and municipal. But, apart from this, village wants were supplied by what is known in Gujarat as *Muletsro* Funds, which are a certain percentage of imperial revenue set apart for the construction and repairs of village *chownies* and other village works. It is well known that balances to the credit of these Fund, varying in amount from two to three lakhs of rupees, still lie unused with every district Collector in Gujarat, and are available for village works. They are altogether apart from local funds.

17. The first impulse to the collection of funds for education and works of

Sir George Wingate's  
Proposals

local public utility in the Bombay Presidency was given by the late Sir (then Captain) George Wingate, the pioneer of the Bombay Revenue Survey,—an officer whose views on many public, administrative, and economic questions of the day were far in advance of those of the Government of the time. In 1839, he warmly supported Mr. Davidson, his friend and coadjutor, in the work of the Revenue Survey in the Decan, in his proposals to devote a portion of the funds remitted from the land tax to the establishment of village schools. His recommendation, although favourably viewed by the then Bombay Government, did not meet with a ready response. Ten years after, similar suggestions for raising funds for

village education were made by Mr Jonathan Duncan Inverarity. His suggestions, too, appear to have been laid aside. In 1852,\* however, Major Wingate submitted a scheme for providing means of education and internal communication in all rural districts of the Presidency, as they came under survey. This scheme was discussed among different officials, but nothing practical came out of it, though, we are told, "there was a wonderful unanimity in approval" of its general features." To Sir Bartle Frere, who has been to Bombay what Sir Donald Macleod was to the Panjab, this Presidency is indebted for a practical plan of local self government. In a Government Resolution No 3115, dated the 16th September, 1863, he sketched out a project for raising funds

Sir Bartle Frere, the real founder of the Local Funds system for education and works of local utility in the districts, for organizing Local Fund Committees, and giving them 'an influential voice in the disposal of the funds. He found that there was a general agreement among all district officials regarding the following points —

I That there should be local funds for the promotion of education in the rural districts, and for the formation of local boards

II. That these funds should be, in part at least, provided by a local cess imposed, in addition to the local assessment, where no pledge, expressed or implied to the contrary, had been given and, where such a pledge had been given, deducted, if Government permit, from the land assessment, or levied by a voluntary rate from the payers of the land tax

III That the tax payers should have an influential voice in the disposal of the funds

In connection with the above principles, the points which Sir Bartle Frere's Questions arising out of his scheme Government considered were—(1) of what shall the local funds consist, besides the local education and road cess on the land assessment? (2) what shall be the rate of that local cess and the mode of its levy? (3) how shall it be divided between education and roads? and (4) how shall the funds be managed and applied?

With respect to the first point, the Government decided that the local funds should include the following funds in addition to the local percentage on land assessment —All toll and ferry funds not specially excepted, the surplus cattle pound fund, &c. As to the second point, Government laid down that there should be imposed an educational and road cess amounting to an anna for every rupee of Government assessment. On the third point, Government decided that of one anna of the local cess, one third, or four pies, should be devoted to education, and two thirds, or eight pies, to roads, to repairs of village wells and public buildings, planting of road side trees, and other objects of public utility. The fourth point related to the management and application of the funds and on this Government decided that

\* See Nairne's *Hand book Chap XI II., Local Funds* page 234 (Second Edition)

"success will depend on the degree of freedom allowed to the local managers of the funds" [The italics are mine]

18 In accordance with the system thus established, funds were raised in all districts of the Presidency by voluntary or semi-voluntary contributions. In Sind, the levy of the funds was legalized by Bombay Act VIII. of 1865. In the rest of the Presidency, however, the funds were raised, since 1863, by the authority of Government, though no legal form was given to such authority, the cess having been imposed at the time of the survey settlement coming into operation; but in some parts the contributions were purely voluntary. It is noticeable that, during this period of voluntary or semi-voluntary contributions, local fund budgets, for local works throughout the Presidency, comprised proposals for wells, tanks, and such other works as were considered to meet the local wants of the cess payers. Such applications of funds made the levy of the contributions at once popular, as the levy was looked upon by the people as a very effective substitute for collections through a committee of villagers, which was the system in vogue before. The collections thus made amounted in 1863 to somewhere near fifteen lakhs. Some persons, however, objected to make the payment, and since the cess had not been

Legal effect given to the legalized, its levy could not be enforced. The importance of giving legal effect to the contributions hitherto levied, and that which may hereafter be levied, appeared expedient. A Bill was accordingly brought into the Bombay Legislative Council for the purpose of legalizing the imposition of local funds by the Hon (now Sir) Barrow Ellis on the 5th February, 1869. In moving the first reading of the Bill, Sir Barrow remarked—"It was one of the principal features of the Bill, now before the Council, that by the formation of local committees, to whom, he hoped, by

Principal feature of the Local Funds Bill—its tentative nature "degrees very much more power would be entrusted than was at present allowable, the people might become accustomed to take an interest in the administration of their own affairs, and give that assistance, of which Government stood so much in need, in regulating and providing for local requirements and improvements."\* As indicating that the measure was tentative, and that the wish of the Government was, at no distant date, to introduce the principle of representation, Sir Barrow Ellis remarked that, in making nominations to the committees, the principle of representation would be kept in view, and that in the case of holders of alienated villages, the instructions to the Collectors were to send up for the nomination of Government such persons amongst their number as might be elected by the holders of such villages. Thus a partial application of the elective principle formed one of the distinct features of the Act. At the second reading of the Bill, Sir Barrow Ellis referred, in a more pointed manner, to this tentative feature in the Bill. He observed—"He was strongly of opinion that the time would come, and, he

\* See page 9 of the Proceedings of the Bombay Legislative Council for 1869

"trusted, that it was not far distant, when provisions could be made without  
"difficulty for the election of the general representatives for the committee" \*

#### Second feature

The second feature of the measure was that the proceeds of the cess were to be devoted to purely local objects, that is to say, that, as Sir Barrow Ellis stated, "the people should receive by reason of the payment something which they had not before, and which, but for the payment, they would not receive at all" † Accordingly district and taluka Local Fund Committees were formed. The District Local Fund Committee consisted of the Collector as President, the First Assistant Collector, the Huzur Deputy Collector, the Executive Engineer, except as regards educational matters, when the Educational Inspector was substituted, and an Inamdar, or holder of an alienated village elected as provided in Rule 29 of the Local Fund Rules. The Taluka Local Fund Committee consisted of the Assistant or Deputy Collector, the Mamlatdar or Mahalkar, an officer of the Public Works Department, an Inamdar elected as provided in Rule 27, and three holders of alienated land in the taluka nominated by the Collector.

19 During the first year of the passing of the Act, the revenue rose from fifteen lakhs to forty three lakhs ‡. The reason of this suddenly large increase is to be sought for in the fact that whereas Inamdars and other holders of alienated lands paid their one anna during the period of semi voluntary contributions on the amount of quit rents (*jodi* in the Deccan, and *salam* in Gujrat) payable by them to Government, under the operation of the Act they were made to pay this cess, calculated on the total assessment of lands (*khurial*), which would be leviable to Government, if the lands were not exempt.

20 How the local funds have come to be administered since the passing of Act III of 1869 may be briefly stated. The share of the local funds devoted to

Disposal of Local Funds education is made over to the Educational Department for the support of primary schools. Beyond thus

acting as the media of transfer of funds, the Committees do little or nothing in the matter of education. In respect of the other portion (two thirds) of the one anna cess, intended by the Act to be devoted to works of local utility, it is worthy of note that, during the second or third year of the Act, the cess payers appear to have seen reasons to complain. In 1872, the Government of Bombay,

Inquiry by the Govern- in compliance with the orders of the Government of  
ment of India into local India, § called for reports from their district officers  
taxation as to 'whether the existing taxes create a feeling of  
'discontent in the country or among any particular section of the people. In

\* See page 9 of the Proceedings of the Bombay Legislative Council for 1869

† Ibid.

‡ Exclusive of Branch Local Funds Revenue—*Final Bombay Administration Report for 1870-71* page 73 which gives the Local Fund income of each district in the Presidency

§ No. 2017 dated 19th August 1902—*Final Reports on Taxation in British India 1902* page 47

Mr W H Havelock—than whom, perhaps, the Government of Bombay had seldom had a more able and conscientious revenue officer in the whole rank of the Civil Service of this Presidency—wrote

As connected with the subject of maintaining specific conditions in their integrity I would respectfully urge the necessity of preserving the rule that local fund cess should be expended in the talukas in which it is levied the object of which is to secure the local expenditure of a local rate. One reasonable exception is made under Rule IV in the case of communications connecting adjacent talukas but a dissatisfied payer of the local fund cess in one of the Satara Talukas can hardly be expected to understand the logic under which large sums from the Satara local cess funds have been transferred to the Provincial Pertabghar Ghant Road without a formal vote of the committee, who would undoubtedly have protested and in the face of the remonstrance of the Revenue Commissioner.

In summing up the opinions of the district officers, Sir Philip Edmund Wodehouse, the Governor of Bombay, recorded a minute, dated the 3rd November, 1872, in which, among other things, he observed, 'that in the expenditure of local funds sufficient attention has not been paid to the principle of localization, and that the payers of the rate have had reason, in some cases, to complain of their funds being concentrated on large distant objects to the neglect of their own immediately local wants,' and further, that "this Government should take an early opportunity of examining the operation of the local committees, keeping carefully in view the principle of strict localization which it is so necessary to enforce."

21 We have here the unmistakable evidence of the district officers who actually administered the local funds, and of the head of the Government, conclusively pointing to cases of misapplication of large sums of money from local fund purposes. The testimony of Mr Havelock shows that this misapplication was carried on without the President of a Local Fund Committee waiting for even a formal vote of the Committee, and that even the remonstrance of the Revenue Commissioner was of no avail. On the other hand, the powers of the Local Fund Committees

Limitation of powers of Local Fund Committees in matters of expenditure on works of local usefulness were most circumscribed. According to Local Fund Budget rules original works and repairs, the cost of each of which shall not exceed Rs 2,500 and which do not require professional skill, were to be constructed through the agency of the Committee but all works in excess of Rs 1,000, requiring engineering skill, should be undertaken by the Public Works Department, as also roads, the mileage cost of which shall not exceed Rs 500. For superintendence and establishment the charges made by the Executive

P W D how paid from Local Funds. Engineer, was first at the rate of seven and a half per cent, and subsequently increased to fifteen per cent, on the amount actually expended by him during the year. As a matter of fact, the Executive Engineer for Local Funds was, in the execution of local fund works, master of the Local Funds Committee, instead of being, as he is now to be justly regarded, as the *servant* of the Committee. As an officer of the P

W D, he was subordinate only to that department, and was not to be interfered with by the Committee. Hence it has come to this, that it is the P. W. D. which, on receipt of projects of works from district Committees, judges what works in each district shall be undertaken and what not. Hence, also, the policy which governs that department for the time being determines whether small works of purely local usefulness are, or are not, to have precedence over large and distant works, such as provincial roads. The P. W. Department was at this time practically under the control of General Sir Michael

General Sir Michael Kennedy. It is not surprising that this officer should be a strong advocate of long roads and extensive communications, so much so, that there came to be two rival parties in the Government holding diametrically opposite views as to the objects on which local funds should be spent. The district Collectors were more or less for objects contemplated by the Act\* while General Kennedy was for works of great magnitude, cost and of general utility, on which imperial and provincial funds used to be expended before. He deprecated the policy of the localization of works, "for," said he, "it necessitates works being carried

Long District Roads vs Small Village Works "on slowly and by pieces, and they are too scattered for the exercise of proper supervision." It was

plain, however, that such works *did not* require any supervision from the P. W. D. The fact was that the P. W. D. was anxious to justify its existence in the eyes of Government, in the absence of important works of imperial character carried on in the interior of the country. And how can it justify its existence, unless it finds, by hook or by crook, some work to do? If local funds were devoted chiefly to meet taluka wants, they would necessarily be of an unpretending character, requiring no great engineering skill or assistance from the Executive Engineers. The occupation of these Engineers would be gone, irretrievably gone, if ambitious or extensive and expensive works were not undertaken out of the local funds. In this view of the matter, their advocacy

View of Sir Philip Wodehouse's Government for long roads becomes at least intelligible. Sir Philip Wodehouse clearly saw through this advocacy,

and understood what it meant. And he had the firmness to set his face against importunate but unfair demands on the part of the Public Works Department, for he laid down once more clearly that "the limit of the (local fund) expenditure is the taluka, and it having come to the notice of Government that the receipts have, in some cases, not been strictly confined to the talukas in which they were raised, orders have been issued on the subject. Government are particularly anxious that the local funds revenues of each taluka should be spent, as far as possible, on improvements, &c. in it"† But these orders appear to have been systematically disregarded by the Public Works Department,

\* Rule III of the Local Fund Budget Rules provides that the (Local Fund) Committee shall also guard against local funds being concentrated on large distant objects to the neglect of more immediate wants. *Narrative Revenue Handbook* p. 246

† Bombay Administration Report for 1872-73 page 511

the number of such small works constructed for the village or the taluka the greater was the satisfaction to the villagers that they received something tangible for their money. These works were so many visible proofs to the cess payers, that their money was by no means wasted. On the contrary, no better fulfilment of the object of their payment could be conceived. Such works required no professional or engineering skill. An efficient establishment of overseers was

Usefulness of taluka all that was needed. The works interested the people committees.

The taluka committee, knowing that a certain number of projects were to be carried out in their taluka, took the greatest interest in them. They studied carefully their budgets, their wants, their income, their expenditure. Assured of a definite income, they discussed with zeal and excitement which of the several projects in their taluka had the first claim on their attention, and which could well be deferred for another year. In this way, small but (to the cess payers) works of the greatest utility were constructed, and when the thought entered their minds that the execution of such works was in compliance with their views and their wishes, they looked upon them with a glow of pride, and really thought local self government was something which threw a good deal of responsibility on

their interest in local works a proof of some reality of local self government. This each member was led to think that he was, in a measure, an instrument of supplying a local want.

The abandonment of the *talukdar* system naturally gave a blow to all the fond wishes of the member, weakened their zeal, and led the people to suspect that the guarantee of Government as to the expenditure of local funds for local purposes was after all a sham and a delusion.

25 The second effect of the new policy was not only to set the district committees to act directly in the teeth of this "fixed" policy of Government, which required that projects for the general development of the resources of the

Second effect of Sir Richard Temple's new policy district should be subordinated to those of local utility, but to raise white elephants in the shape of large provincial road, involving an expenditure of

White elephants raised in the shape of large district and provincial roads lakhs of rupees, and to commit not only the local fund income for the current year, but its prospective revenues for, in some cases, say twenty, thirty or fifty years, to meet interest and repayments of loans raised on the securities of such revenues.

26 The third effect was (where the current year's local fund revenue was found insufficient for large undertakings) to lead to the adoption of most irregular proceedings. Money was first spent out of local funds without any provision being made for it in the budget, and, since the accounts must be adjusted before the close of the official year, recourse was had to loans. The case of the Begum Taluk at Byrapur, in the Kharagpur district may be cited in point. Money (Rs. 32,000 or thereabouts), not budgeted for in the district local fund budget, was spent in 1878 and 1879 on



system which the levy of the one anna cess was specially designed to do away with. The disappointment of the cess payers, when thus made to bear a double burden for one and the same object, may thus be well conceived. In vain they argued that the purpose for which they paid the one anna cess was to meet the cost of special works they stood most in need of. And yet, when the time came for meeting a sore want of their village or taluka, they were called upon to pay

an extra sum in the shape of half its cost! Such enforced contributions enforced levies figure in the annual local fund budget of every district as 'private contributions'. The amount of such contributions for the entire Presidency, during each of the past ten years, I have not the means of ascertaining, but it has been certainly large enough. As to the justice or fairness of such 'private contributions' from poor villagers for works of local utility, levied in direct contravention of the principles and objects of the local fund Act, I leave the reader to judge for himself.

29 With respect to the system of five years budgets, all I can say is that it is difficult to understand how any body of sensible men—official and non official, having some self-respect and not desirous of being extinguished as voluntary

Disastrous effects of the five years budget system on local self government agents, well knowing what their duties and responsibilities under the Act are—could be brought to acquiesce

in a system of works which tied them hand and foot for so many as the next five years, regardless of what may happen, and what urgent wants they may have to meet, in course of that time! Forecasts of works likely to be completed within the next five years are intelligible enough, and such forecasts are doubtless of value at times, especially when a famine is about to break out or actually breaks out. But as the system worked, no more effectual extinguisher could have been put to local self government in spirit as well as in word. What is more astonishing than this, however, is to find that

Extension of the system the succeeding Government, instead of at once putting to seven years! a stop to this folly of local self government, should

have thought fit to uphold it by extending the five years budget system to seven years! It is satisfactory to note that the very first effect of the Government of India's Resolution, of the 18th May last, has been to knock the seven-years local fund budget system on the head.

30 No account of the administration of local funds would be complete or fair which omitted to note the zeal and assiduity of district officers in the execution of their duties as Presidents or members of district and taluka committees. In many cases they have not omitted to point out where the policy and action of the Government came into conflict with the principles and objects of the Act

Helplessness of district officials and to protest even strongly against it. But, if in spite of their strong views and vehement protests, they were ordered to follow a certain course of policy, the awkwardness and difficulty of their position may be more easily imagined than expressed. The real responsibility of the maladministration of local funds, therefore, rests more at

the head quarters of the Government, where the full meaning and objects of the arguments sought to be foisted upon it by the P. W. D., was scarcely realized

31 Under these circumstances, one need hardly feel surprised to see a

The whole local fund whole system of local funds administration, beautifully system demoralized conceived from the first, brought to a point at which it became demoralized, and to find some of the best districts in the Presidency unable to show a fair number of local works in return for the poor villagers' money In Broach, the total receipts from the commencement of local funds to the end of the official year 1881-82 have amounted to something like 32 lakhs of rupees. Of this sum about 7 lakhs of rupees have gone to provide for education, leaving 25 lakhs available for works of local utility Can any one say that an appreciable portion of this money has gone to meet the village and taluka wants of the district? If it had, there is little doubt that Broach villages would have put on a far different aspect from what they present to our view at this day And what is true of Broach applies with more or less force to almost all districts in the Bombay Presidency.

Main conclusions deducible from the past history of local funds.

32 The main conclusions, then, deducible from this brief review of the past history of local funds administration may be thus formulated —

I That the idea of constructing works of local public utility is deeply rooted in the Hindu mind, and has found practical applications, from the earliest times, in charitable works constructed independently of the assistance of the government of the day, and that the predominance of this charitable or religious sentiment affords a presumption that, with proper care in the selection of men, not only will lively interest be shown by the representatives of the cess payers in the administration of local funds, but that honesty and economy will be ensured in the execution of works of local public utility

II That the scheme of taluka and district local fund committees, founded on the lines of the proposals of Sir Bartle Frere, had for its objects (a) the promotion of education in rural districts, (b) the formation and repairs of works useful to the rural population, and (c) the giving to cess-payers an influential voice in the disposal of the fund, and that, accordingly, the success in the management and application of the funds was believed to depend on the degree of freedom allowed to the local managers of the funds

III That the two prominent features of the Bill, which was legalized into Act III of 1869, were (a) to accustom the people to take an interest in the management of their own affairs, and (b) to apply the proceeds of the cess to purely local objects, or, in the words of Sir Barrow Ellis, the mover of the Bill, 'the people should receive by reason of the payment something which they had not before, and which, but for the payment, they would not receive at all'

IV That the fact that the Local Fund Act was, at the time it was enacted, deemed a tentative measure, and designed to develop the principles of local self

government as time permitted, is evidenced from the wish of the Bombay Government of the day, as conveyed through Sir Barrow Ellis, that the day was not distant when provisions could be made without difficulty for the election of the general representatives for the committees

V. That in course of actual administration of local funds during the last twenty years, it has become abundantly clear that the original objects sought to be promoted in the raising and expenditure of funds were incensurably departed from, and had resulted in glaring misapplications of funds to purposes entirely foreign to the scope of such expenditure, and that the representatives of the cess-payers had not only no influential voice in the expenditure, but that the subordinate part they were left to act in the expenditure of such funds, left no room whatever for the exercise of any independence by them,

VI. That this misapplication of funds, systematically carried on by, and under the control of, the P. W. D., was against Rule III of the Local Fund Budget Rules, was often without the concurrence of Local Fund Committees, and, at times, in spite of the protests of high officials, such as the Commissioners, and in utter disregard of the oft repeated orders issued by the government of Sir Philip Wodehouse.

VII That the predominant influence of General Sir Michael Kennedy, as Secretary to the P. W. D., won for that Department the battle of long provincial roads against small taluka works, constructed out of local funds, with the result that the current and prospective revenues of local funds came, in several instances, to be pledged for the next twenty, thirty and fifty years for repayment of loans and interest on them incurred for expenditure on works of a provincial character, or which were formerly defrayed out of provincial or imperial funds

VIII That another result of the new policy was to give rise to the unfair and mischievous system of raising funds by public subscriptions among village cess payers, which the local funds Act was designed specially to counteract

IX. That though, in consequence of this, the representatives of the contributors had no influential voice in the disposal of the funds, as the scheme originally laid down contemplated, yet they showed an amount of interest in the management of local affairs, which was only limited by the very limited powers of control over expenditure left to them

X That the radical measures introduced into the system of local funds expenditure by Sir Richard Temple brought about a complete subversion of the system of local funds by means of five years' budgets, by the virtual effacement of taluka committees as active bodies, by the reduction of district committees to a political nonentity, by permitting famine works to be raised out of local funds, by starving the funds for small works of great use to the villages by compelling local fund committees to raise loans and mortgage the prospective local fund income for interest on loans and their repayment, by winning for Sir Richard Temple credit for an economical famine relief policy at the expense of local fund revenues,

"name which recalls its ancient constitution of five persons" (Panch). This representative element is to be found, even at the present day, among the

Existing village communities in Gujarat Narwadars and Bhagdars of Gujarat, in the customs of the trade guilds, in the common mode of settling many social and caste disputes by the heads of castes, and by the leaders of that collective community known as the 'Mahajan'. In any one of these forms the representative character of the institutions may be found. What Sir Donald Macleod said of the Punjab in 1861-62 applies, even at this day, to the state of this Presidency. He remarked —

"The genius of the natives is essentially suited for municipal organization, and, as rightly observed by the Supreme Government, municipal institutions are as well adapted to the natives of India as to those of England. This municipal organization still exists in every trade, and did exist previous to our rule in every village. But their experience has been of a microscopic character. In social matters the representative element was almost the only regulating principle. In the affairs of State none was ordinarily allowed to interfere. Hence municipal organizations among the natives have been limited to small sections of society having common interests. This should be borne in mind in all our endeavours to turn municipal organization to account. We should commence with the atoms of which native society is composed, and work upwards in such a manner as they may themselves suggest, or as may be found most congenial to them. To give the people a real interest in the arrangements contemplated it is absolutely essential that they should be given a large discretion in the matter of expenditure. To work any practical use out of the people, they should not continue ever to be treated as children or imbeciles."

34 Under the British rule municipal institutions in the Bombay Presidency (except at the Presidency town, which will be spoken of separately) do not date earlier than 1850, when Act XXVI of 1850 gave them legal status, and empowered

taxes to be raised from the inhabitants of any town or suburb other than the Presidency Towns of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, to be applied to the making, repairing, cleaning, lighting, or watching any public streets, roads, drains or tanks, or to the prevention of nuisances. Under Act II of 1862 municipalities were empowered to apply a portion, not exceeding 2½ per cent. of their annual income, to the construction and support of dispensaries, hospitals, schools, and a reasonable portion to the watering of the streets. The same Act also gave authority to the Governor in Council to enforce the right and just appropriation of the taxes raised. By Bombay Act IX of 1862 certain officers were declared *ex officio* members of Municipal Commissions, and power was given to the Governor in Council to depute his authority under Act XXVI of 1850 to the Police Commissioner and the Commissioner in Sind. By a Notification, dated 6th April 1868, issued under the authority of Act V of 1868, section I, the powers conferred on the Governor in Council by Act XXVI. of 1850 were delegated to the Commissioner in Sind, but for the rest of the Presidency the Governor in Council has retained the authority of approving the rules made by the Municipal Commissioners. The only other law of importance relating to municipalities in this Presidency is Bombay Act I. of 1871, which provides for the mainte-

nance of Police by them, but which is now in abeyance. The next most

Bombay District Municipal Act VI. of 1873. The principal new feature of this Act was a certain advance in the principle of representation and responsibility. The creation of municipalities was left altogether to Government. They would not create first class municipalities until they were satisfied that the people claiming to superior powers of self government were qualified, by their intelligence and adoption of sanitary improvements, to exercise them. The object of Act VI. of 1873 was, as stated in the preamble, 'to foster the desire for local self-government.' How far this result has been secured, a glance at the history of municipal work in some of the larger cities in the mofussil of this Presidency, such as Surat, Ahmedabad, Poona and Dharwar, ought to tell us. Unfortunately, no detailed reports of the work done by these municipalities have been published or available for the information of the public, except in the single case of Surat, for which we have reports of each year's administration since 1866, when Mr. Hope took charge of the Municipality. A careful perusal of these reports shows that Mr. Hope availed himself of the intelligence and experience of the native members of the Surat Municipality to the greatest advantage. He treated them with respect and civility—listened patiently to all they had to say. He sought their advice, benefited by their intimate local knowledge and experience, and, above all, imparted in them something of his own zeal and interest for municipal and local funds work. By these means he prepared them for the important work of self government, and proved to the satisfaction of the Government and the public that natives are fit to be entrusted with the management of their own affairs. The experiment, so well tried by Mr. Hope, suggests an inquiry of those who view with doubt and uncertainty the possible results of entrusting natives with enlarged powers, whether they ever worked on Mr. Hope's plan, whether they took the native members of their municipality into confidence, how far they consulted, respected, and trusted them, and allowed them free scope of action? Did they put the powers and capacity for work of these native members to actual test, by placing them in independent charge of works for which they evinced special aptitude, and thereby turned to account those qualities which fit them for high administrative work? The answer to these queries, in nine cases out of ten, would be sure to be in the negative. The truth is that hardly any trial appears to have been made in other municipalities on Mr. Hope's plan, or if any has been made, the public has no information before it of the results of such trials (always excepting the Presidency Town of Bombay). On the contrary, where such trials have been made, the ostensible results of such experiments have been greatly to strengthen the confidence of the officials in favour of the fitness of the non-officials for the management of their own affairs. In ordinary cases, however, the strong will of the Collector has ruled dominant, and put down all sparks of independence. As President, the Collector has, under Act VI.

of 1873, the sole authority to submit questions of importance for the decision of the

Collector's powers under Commissioners. He has a casting vote in all questions, Act VI of 1873 a power of suspending any resolution carried against a minority of not less than two-fifths of those who have voted on the motion, and a power to refer the matter for the decision of the Governor in Council. In town municipalities he is the President, and his Assistant the Vice President. The Collector has absolute power and responsibility vested in him for carrying out the purposes of the Act. He can over-rule the opinion of the whole body of the Commissioners. His Assistant can also over-rule the opinion of the whole body of the Commissioners, subject to appeal to the Collector as President. But as the Assistant Collector takes his steps after consulting the Collector, any appeal against the decision of the Assistant Collector is obviously ineffectual. The Collector as President, and his Assistant as Vice President, displace the Chairman elected by the Commissioners at all meetings which they attend, and as they have at such meetings the sole authority to submit questions of importance for discussion, they can decline to submit for discussion questions which they do not consider it advisable to bring forward.

Though the law gave these ample powers to the Collector, Mr Hope had scarcely ever had any recourse to them. He had much to do with the bringing about of the enactment of Act VI of 1873. But he worked it out in another direction altogether.

35 Mr Hope was in the habit of reviewing each year's administration of municipal affairs at the annual general meeting of the Surat Municipality. Such reviews form a record of sober, earnest work done in an ungrudging spirit. They unfold some of the true principles of municipal government, and show that the Government of India is now doing on a larger scale what Mr. Hope has succeeded in accomplishing on a smaller scale and within a limited area. It will be useful to indicate a few of these principles and the plan on which he worked them out.

The first principle of municipal administration he worked out in Surat was that of giving the non-official members a larger share in the work of administration. Of the success of this plan he speaks with confidence while reviewing the proceedings of the year 1867. His words are —

The Native Commissioners have had a far larger share than formerly of the administration, with such manifest success that the whole managing committee, including its chairman are at present natives and the non-official element has been allowed so far to preponderate over the official, that some members of the latter have scarcely been called on to give any active assistance during the year. The municipal commission is undoubtedly more popular in the sense of being more in the hands of those who represent the people.\*

Again, speaking of the constitution of municipal boards at the annual general meeting in April, 1869, Mr Hope unfolded, in fuller details, the plan of his work —

Our constitution is necessarily the first subject to be considered. This has remained unchanged, and is steadily worked out on the principle in which it was conceived,—that of entrusting the whole of the practical administration to the native members, and of securing to every member notwithstanding our large number, a fair share of work and power by employing him on either the managing committee or the various sub-committees. To such an extent has this been carried that a European has only held office on the managing committee for four months out of twelve, and other sub-committees have, in practice, been entirely natives. Their labours are well known to all. The sub-committee, consisting of Messrs. Jugeevundas, Dwarkadas, and Sultan Ali Beg, assisted by Mr. Sammers, have, through a variety of obstacles, acquired for us about Rs. 80,000 worth of property, without a single instance of illegality or injustice. The executive member of the sanitary sub-committee, Dr. Dosabhai, has carried through, with much tact and success, the delicate duty of the assessment of the Balakere case. Meerza Sultan Ali Beg has materially assisted in all dealings with the butchers—a troublesome class—who, I hope, have now acquiesced in the arrangements which, with the advice of Moon-bee Lutfulla Khan and others, have finally been made for them. To the legal sub-committee we are indebted for good counsel, which has borne such fruit that two out of our three claims have been settled in full, and the third is, I hope, in a fair way of being so. The honorary magistrates have got through no less than 706 cases, notwithstanding the other avocations of some of their number and the illness of others. In short, all members have in one capacity or other, had the opportunity of working and, in most cases, have fully exercised it. The result is, for impartial observers, to ascertain and declare. If municipal administration in Surat be a failure, as some affect to believe, then the fact is a matter for serious consideration to a very large party in both India and England, that a body of native gentlemen have been unable, after fair trial, to administer their own affairs to an extent which cannot fairly be described as either too limited or too extended for their capacity. If, on the other hand, the administration be, as I believe, a decided success, chequered only by the minor shortcomings which from time to time necessarily mark the doings of a mixed body, acting up to the lights of a training, neither professional nor perfect, then it behoves those who advocate the extension of administration by native agency to recognize the fact, and make use of it so far as it is applicable.

36 In 1871, Mr. Hope impressed upon the members of the Surat Municipality the fact that the Supreme Government had recognized that self government for

Lord Mayo's View of a local purposes, with the aid of the people, was a part of Municipal Committee the policy of the British Indian Empire, and, in support of it, called to mind these memorable words of Lord Mayo "I would rather appoint a committee that never met than have no committee at all. It will meet and act some day. What we want is to recognize the principle that we wish to associate with ourselves, whenever it is possible, the natives of the country." Each year satisfied Mr. Hope that the municipal committee in Surat was doing good, honest work. \* During the temporary absence of Mr. Hope in 1871, the

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\* In his annual address reviewing the work of 1870 on the 10th April 1871 he remarked — "That you have in Surat, already availed yourselves to a considerable degree of the power in your hands is a fact beyond dispute. I may say without fear of contradiction that the whole detailed responsibility of affairs is in your hands through your managing committee, upon which a European rarely sits. It is you who hear and dispose of petit ouais, try cases, control the establishments and who do it in a manner that I do not receive half a dozen appeals in the year, and rarely find any ground for interference. Go on, then, in the course which has been opened to you, increase your efforts to dispose punctually and fairly of the business in your hands; do so, moreover on the great principles of truth and moral courage which were so lately impressed on you by one of your own countrymen Mr. Nana Muroji."

education even of an elementary character to them, which was another object contemplated by the scheme, (3) that, as a consequence of the feebleness of the popular voice, there has been a clear diversion of funds from the objects sought to be promoted by Act III of 1869, and, in the opinions of high officials of Government, this maladministration of local funds to works, the cost of which should, properly speaking, have been borne by imperial or provincial revenue, has been such that if application had been made by any person to the Civil Courts, the Courts would have granted injunctions restraining the Committees from making such contributions and (4) that, as regards Municipal Administration in the Presidency during the last twenty years, the result of actual trials has shown that the degree of success attained by certain Municipalities has been in proportion to the scope for the exercise of real control given to their non-official members. These important lessons, deducible from the past history of Local Boards in this Presidency, prepare us the better to examine how far the position taken up in part 2 of the Bombay Government's Resolution of the 19th September last is justified by the actual course of events, and serve to indicate, in the most unmistakable manner, that the plan proposed by the Government of India for the emancipation of Local Boards from the control of executive officers was but a logical and legitimate outcome of the very limited and tentative scope given to the two measures of local self-government in this Presidency—Bombay Act III of 1869 and Act VI of 1873, that the plan neither involves any subversion of the existing system in Bombay, nor does it seek to confer 'unlimited' powers on Local Boards, and that there exist no grounds to suspect any 'fundamental and vital changes' in the existing system but, on the contrary, the 'subversion of the system was completed by Sir R. Temple. On the other hand Lord Ripon's proposals go to fulfil the pledges given by the authors of the present system, and by the previous Governments of Bombay from time to time



the views of both parties. But having, as President, a view of his own to enforce on their attention, it would be too much to expect in human nature that he would refrain, especially in controversial matters, from making statements which are altogether colourless. To the success of the Local Self-Government scheme, it appears to me essential that Local Boards should be freed from the

overshadowing influence of the Collector, however well meaning or estimable he may be. This need not diminish his influence or his usefulness to the Local Boards. On the contrary, it would appear that he would better exercise this influence and be really useful to the Local Boards by being a director and adviser of Local Boards from without than a participator in the action of the collective body. If district Collectors come, as the Government of India rightly observe, "to realize that the system really opens to them a surer field for the exercise of administrative and directive energy than the more autocratic system which it supersedes," then it may be hoped that the period of failures will be short, and that real and substantial progress will very soon become manifest.\* The Government of India, accordingly, would wish to see non official persons acting, wherever practicable, as Presidents or Chairman of Local Boards, and where it may not be possible to get non official Chairmen, the Collector or his Assistant may, for the present, retain his duties. If the Governor in Council has, after much hesitation, at last accepted the principle, and in para 5 of the Resolution of the 27th October, would "assure the Government of India that wherever such a course is practicable and any private person is found fit to discharge the duties of President, and is willing to accept the office, he will have no hesitation in conferring the post upon a non official," and further that "the arrangement for nominating a Collector to be President of the Municipal and Local Fund Committees should be regarded as temporary, and would cease as soon as properly qualified private gentlemen could be found and would be willing to accept the office. It is to be noted that there are four Local Boards for which Chairmen are wanted in most of the districts of this Presidency, namely—District Local Fund Committee, City Municipality, Taluka Local Fund Committee, and Town Municipality. Now, I would grant that doubts may be entertained as to the possibility of finding eligible persons in talukas and towns to act as Chairmen of Taluka Local Fund Committees and Town Municipalities, but it would be found to be a rare case indeed where a whole district should be unable to furnish a fair quota of non official gentlemen fit and willing to discharge the duties of a President of a City Municipality, or show a single individual fit to be President of the District Local Fund Committee. Almost every district in this Presidency has I believe among its residents a body of Government pensioners, some of whom have served as either Deputy Collectors, District Officers, Sub Judges, Magistrates, Managers of Native States on behalf of Government, Head Accountants, Engineers, or in other capacities in the public service and have had when in active service seats on Local Boards in their official capacity. They would be glad

\* Para 5 of the Resolution of the Government of India dated the 18th May, 1880

to find some employment of a character which makes them useful members of Local Boards and of local society. Besides Government pensioners, there would be found to be men of business habits among Jigirdars, Desais, Deshmukhs, Inamdars, Watandars and other land holding classes, and among banking and mercantile classes, and Vakils, private Medical Practitioners and Engineers, from whom it would not be difficult, I think, to select competent men, to whom a regard for the social position which the office of a President of either the Local Fund or the Municipal Committee must confer, would be an inducement to discharge its duties. In Gujarat, for instance, Surat can well afford to give a choice of persons fit to take the place of President of its Municipality from the representatives of the different classes which inhabit the City. Surely it cannot be difficult to find a competent non official gentleman willing to hold this office from among the following names — Rao Bahadur Jugeevundas Khushaldas, now a pensioner, but until lately Deputy Collector and Magistrate of Surat, and for about 20 years a member of the District Local Fund Committee and Municipality, either at Surat or Ahmedabad, Mr Dayabhai Savabchand Vakil Pleader in the District Court of Surat, a man of ability and independence, who has for years been serving as a member of the local Municipality, Rao Bahadur Ochavram Mitharam, late manager of the Native State of Edur, for many years an able British revenue officer, and now a pensioner, Khan Bahadur Meer Gulam Baba Khan, a wealthy and intelligent nobleman a mill owner and landholder, Mr Kankhuro Edalji Modi, an intelligent landholder. Rao Bahadur Jugeevundas Khushaldas would in my opinion, make an efficient non official President of the District Local Fund Committee of Surat. Ahmedabad can also offer from the following names selection of a fit non official Chairman for its City Municipality — Shet Premabhai Hamabhai, Nagar Shet of Ahmedabad and once a member of the Bombay Legislative Council, Rao Bahadur Beechardas Amhadias, C S I, a Mill owner and Banker, and at one time a Member of the Bombay Legislative Council. Mr Runchodlal Chotalal, also a Mill owner and a gentleman of great ability, knowledge and experience, who manages and controls monetary transactions yearly aggregating four or five times the revenue of the Ahmedabad Municipality. Rao Bahadur Bholanath Sarabhai, late Subordinate Judge, 1st class 1st grade, and at present a pensioner, Shet Mayabhai Premabhai, son of the Nagar Shet of Ahmedabad, and a shrewd business man. Mr Naronji Pestonji Contractor, Mr Nurbheram Raghunathdas Vakil, District Court of Ahmedabad. Mr Cowaji Muncherji Karanjawala a well known merchant. Mr Desabhai Khandas, Vakil, and Dr Ruttonji Hormusji. In Mr Runchodlal Chotalal would be found in my opinion, a gentleman peculiarly well qualified to discharge satisfactorily the duties of a non official President of the Ahmedabad District Local Fund Committee. For Broach the names of Mr G Cotton Manager of the Alfred Cotton Mills and partner of Messrs Greaves, Cotton & Co, Desai Kalyanra Hukmatra Inamdar and landed proprietor, and at present a Member of the Broach District Local Fund Committee, Mr Kishoradas Govindas, a leading Vakil of the place, Mr Sorabslaw Dadabhai,

a well educated and independent gentleman of tried ability, and Mr S N. Ginnwall are the o tbat readily occur, as likely to make fit non official Chairmen of the Municipality Mr G Cotton will, I presume, make an efficient President of the District Local Fund Committee In the case of Poona, the names of Rao Bahadur Krishnaraj Luxman Nulkar, Rao Bahadur Kero Luxman Chattré, Mr Dorabji Pudumji, Mr Bahaji Krishna Gadbole may be put forward as the o who are likely to do justice to the office of Chairman of the Municipality. Again, Rao Bahadur Krishnaraj Luxman Nulkar and Rao Bahadur Kero Luxman Chattré may be confidently looked to as those in whom, as Presidents, the interests of the Poona District Local Fund Committee will be sure to be well looked after Other districts can also afford to furnish similar names for the office of non-official Chairmen to preside over their Local Fund and Municipal Boards

43 It is necessary here to say that I do not see any reason why the choice

Non-official Europeans as Presidents of Local Boards of a non official President should be limited to Natives exclusively The field of selection may be made as wide as possible by interesting non official Europeans in the work of Local Self Government In the large Cities of this Presidency, such as Ahmedabad, Broach Surat, and Poona, there is always a number of non official Europeans in the persons of Agents to European Houses, or Bank Agents or Managers of Mills, and other private gentlemen whose knowledge and experience of representative institutions in England or Europe may be most usefully turned to account as Presidents of Local Boards I am sure such independent European gentlemen would help the cause of self government in a material degree This has been well exemplified in Bombay in the case of the Bombay Municipality, in the Bombay Legislative Council, and in all public movements at the Presidency, undertaken and carried out in the name of the inhabitants of Bombay It may be useful to point out here that, on this side of India the relations between Natives and non official Europeans have been of a friendly and harmonious character, and free from the unpleasantness which now and then seem to characterize some parts of British India This is a hopeful sign In the mofussil cities of this Presidency, also, instances are not wanting to show that, where fair opportunities have been given to them non official Europeans have done, and are doing, useful service One instance out of several in point, which occurs to me as I write, is that of Mr Cotton, of the enterprising firm of Messrs Greaves, Cotton & Co, of Broach Mr Cotton is Manager of the Alfred Mills at Broach He has for several years past served, with credit to himself and benefit to the Municipality, as Chairman of the Broach Municipality Other instances may also be cited On the whole, it seems to me that the cause of Local Self Government would gain largely by the association of non official Europeans with Natives in the work of Local Boards.

44 As regards Taluka Local Fund Committees and Town Municipalities, I am of opinion that, for the present, it is expedient that the Collector or his Assistant should preside over both these Local Boards, for the simple reason that, in the case of small Town Municipalities and Taluka Local Funds

Taluka Boards to be for the present presided over by the Collector or his Assistant

the subject, if there is one thing more clear than another, it is that the average Elective System unsuited Kunbi, Koh, Nankra and Dubla of one of the sub- in backward districts divisions of the Panch Mahal or Surat districts, or the Bhil of Khandesh is many, many degrees removed from the average Ahmedabad banker, merchant or shopkeeper. Caste alone is an important factor which differentiates the bulk of the town and country population from that of the City. Nowhere, perhaps, are the lines of difference in respect of the general educational status of the people so strongly marked as in Gujarat, where caste organization is more compact than elsewhere in the Presidency. But besides caste, other circumstances, such as education, habits and customs, occupations and associations are all more or less powerful agents in diversifying the general intellectual and moral character of the people in such cities and towns as Pooni, Ahmedabad, Surat, or Godhra, Veerangaum, and Kalole. "The question," says Sir Charles Aitchison, "whether measures should be taken to introduce the elective system "or not, should depend upon the probability of forming efficient constituencies, "and the marks which denote a proper constituency are, in the Lieutenant "Governor's opinion, two, viz. —(1) capacity for giving an honest and intelligent "vote, and (2) a substantial interest in the proceedings of the local bodies based "on payment of the rates or taxes which they administer." It is evident the Bombay Government takes for granted that this capacity for "giving an honest and intelligent vote" is to be found equally in the highly-gifted, intellectual Brahman as in the naked, savage Koh. It may be admitted that a certain educational status is not the heritage of any particular class or race, but the Government has to go by the facts as it finds them, and one of the patent facts is that in respect of the average intelligence of the bulk of the people, some districts are far in advance, whilst others are far backward. "On the frontier, for "example," says the Lieut.-Governor of the Punjab, "where personal animosities "are high, an election might be a signal for disturbance or outrage." When, however, the proposal to grant elective representation equally to all Town Municipalities is made by the Bombay Government in order to comply with the "expressed desire of the Government of India that the elective franchise should "be introduced generally as far as may be found practicable," (para 11 of the September Resolution) it becomes necessary to say that the fact that the Government of India have given a wide discretion to the local Governments in the matter in their Resolution of the 18th May last seems to have been ignored. With a view to remove possible misconceptions on the subject, however, His Excellency the Viceroy has explained it with still greater force and clearness in his speech at Lahore in reply to the address of the Municipality of that place †. Even a less cautious statesman than Lord Ripon, after a short residence in the country, and knowing

\* Punjab Government Resolution of September 7th, 1882, para 22

† We did not desire to lay down an uniform system to be adopted under all circumstances throughout the length and breadth of this great land, whether in regard to the composition of local bodies to the extension of the franchise or to the system of control. On the contrary no one who reads the Resolution of the Government of India of last May, can fail to perceive that what we sought was to see a variety of

something of India and her people might have seen that in this land of diverse races, differing from each other in material, intellectual and moral development by wide gulfs one plan common to all provinces and conditions of people would be obviously unsuitable. Native rulers understand this feature of social organisation well enough, and have based their policy of assessments of land accordingly. In Native States, rates of land assessments to this day vary according as the

Instance of Native Rulers basing their land policy on diversity of intelligence in their subject races

cultivator is the thrifty and industrious Kunbi, or the careless, improvident and idle Koh, Bhil or Naikra. This was also the feature of the land system in the early period of British rule in the Gujarat districts of

this Presidency, and continued so till the introduction of the Revenue Survey about thirty years ago. If variety of plans, then, was a feature of the administration of what may be regarded as the chief source of imperial revenue in this country, one need not go farther in support of sounder arguments in its favour on which to found a workable system of Local Self Government among races differing so widely as the higher classes of Hindus do from the wild tribes of Kohs and Naikras of the Ponch Mahals, the Bhils of Khandesh or the Dublas of the Surat districts.

16 A cursory examination of the tests laid down in paras 15 and 17 in the

Examination of Tests for the Elective Franchise

Resolution of the Bombay Government of the 19th September last, shows that it is on the rock of an uni-

form system of electoral tests in districts widely differing from each other that some of the proposals of the Bombay Government split themselves. They would be found to be unworkable in practice as they are unfair in principle. If municipal taxation, as at present devised, was based on an uniformity of system some thing might be said for uniformity of tests. But this is not the case. One instance would be sufficient to make this clear. Among some eight tests laid down in para 15, the last test (8) which qualifies a municipal voter is a payment of Rs 5

systems tried in different parts of the country in order that we might find out by actual experience what system was or what systems were best suited to each province and each portion of this great Peninsula. We desired, above all things, that the new arrangements for self government should as far as possible be those which were most consistent with the habits and customs of the people in different parts of India; that they be drawn up in close consultation with representative men of different classes and districts; and that they be based so far as may be upon indigenous native institutions which still exist, and that we should avail ourselves to the utmost of those organs or groups to use the felicitous expression of my honourable friend the Lieutenant-Governor which still lies at the heart of the system to be founded might be in consonance with the traditions of the country and the feelings and requirements of the people. Then again gentlemen, we do not require that the system which we wished to inaugurate be applied by the various local Governments to every portion of the territory under their respective control. We are not so foolish as to believe that all parts of India are fitted for a system of this description. We know very well that in this great land there are men of many races in many stages of civilisation, and that while you find in the most advanced parts of India men of developed intellects great intelligence skilled in the management of their own affairs and well capable of managing public affairs in their own localities there are also parts of the country which are inhabited by races still scarcely removed from a savage state and that it would be utterly absurd to propose any system of self-government for the Sonthals, Bhils and Khonds. See Lord Ripon's recent Speech at Lahore.

per annum direct municipal taxes Let us see how this test is likely to work. Besides tolls, the chief direct municipal rates and taxes in this Presidency are three, namely—a house tax, a wheel tax, and the halalcross cess Now, of the Municipalities in the Northern Division of this Presidency, those of Paranty and Modasa in the Ahmedabad district, and that of Nadiad in the Kaira district, recently elevated to the rank of a City Municipality, have no direct taxes in any shape whatever, their income being wholly derived from octroi duties. These Municipalities have accordingly no direct ratepayers to return, and so far the test becomes useless to them In the Central Division, the Municipalities of Puntamba in the Ahmednagar district, of Sisrad and Junir in the Poona district, and of Barsi in the Sholapur district have none of these direct taxes, while there were no receipts from either the house tax or the wheel-tax during the year 1880-81 in Islampur, Tasgaon, Mym, Puresavh, and Mhaswad in the Satara district, and no receipts whatever on these heads from Karmala and Pandharpur, in the Sholapur district In these cases also the test for direct taxes is valueless for the purposes of the franchise Another fact worthy of note is that

The Test of Rs 5 direct municipal taxes valueless for practical purposes the levy of the three principal direct taxes is not common to all Municipalities in the Presidency While the house tax is a common feature of the Municipalities in the Central and Southern Divisions, it is not so in the Northern Division. It is levied in the Kaira town and the Broach city, and in the Municipalities of Thana, Kolaha and the Panch Mahal districts, and has recently been introduced, we are told, "against very determined opposition 'in Dholka, Balsar, and Dakor'" In fact the house tax is most unpopular in Gujarat On the other hand, the halalcross cess, while pretty fairly general in the Northern Division of the Presidency, is rare in the Central Division and almost nil in the Southern Division As to the wheel tax, it may be generally remarked that in the mofussil of this Presidency, the bulk of the well to do classes do not, as a rule, keep carriages It is the aristocratic and the wealthier classes (who, by the way, are few and far between), that keep them, while at the principal railway stations in the Presidency, carriages are hired on hire by men whose object is trade It cannot have been intended that a constituency of municipal voters should be represented appreciably by owners of carriages on hire. Ahmedabad, for instance, has no house tax, but a wheel tax, paid by some 930 persons, of whom a pretty large number consists of those who ply carriages on hire, and the halalcross cess, paid by 30,000 persons. By itself the halalcross cess cannot constitute a proper test on account of the smallness of its amount (it ranges from 12 annas to a rupee and a half per annum), and because of the unduly large number of cess payers it would return in a town or city as compared to the number of population In Broach they have a house tax and a wheel tax, but no halalcross cess Cotton gins and factories which pay municipal rates at

\* Report on Municipal Taxation and Expenditure in the Bombay Presidency and Sind for the year 1880-81 page 4

Rs. 25 per month, are 13 in number, while first class houses, as classified at the time of the 1st Census, and paying rates at Rs. 4 per annum, are 84 in number, and second class houses, paying Rs. 2 per annum are 708 in number. Thus it would be difficult for cess payers generally to make up Rs. 5 from the house tax alone, or a fair number from those who pay the wheel tax.

The result of the proposed test will be that it will be practically unworkable by reason of all the three chief taxes not being found to exist in one place, by reason of the taxes taken singly or even wholly, not often making up Rs. 5 per annum, and, further, by reason of the wheel tax qualifying only a very small number of rate payers, and the halalcore cess alone qualifying an unduly large number of them. Thus this uniform test of Rs. 5 direct municipal taxes becomes unworkable and valueless for all practical purposes of the franchise.

47. It seems to me that, in determining the qualifications for the franchise, the course open to the least objection would be, as I said before, to go by the light of facts as you find them in each district or in each City Municipality, and frame your standards on the basis of those facts, while taking care to introduce no novel changes likely to be unpopular. Where for example, as in the Dekkan and

the Southern Maratha Country, the house tax forms the chief source of direct taxation, it may be made,

under certain limitations as to classes of houses and the amount of payment, the basis of a test to qualify rate payers. The wheel tax, again, may in some places be made another test of the franchise, care being taken to exclude owners of carriages intended for hire. The halalcore cess, which obtains chiefly in Gujarat, or it would perhaps be more correct to say in the Northern Division of the Presidency, offers no valid test, but in place of it, and where there is no house tax, a house property test may well take its place. The Census of 1881 has, I am informed, classed house property in every town and city in this

Presidency under certain classes and has given its enumeration under those classes. This may, for the present serve as a basis of electoral suffrage. I admit that this Census classification of house property may not be quite correct, it was not made with a view to electoral franchise, but it may serve *provisionally* as a basis, until a Sub Committee, composed of persons well informed on the subject, draws up for each Municipality a more accurate list. Another plan, more suitable perhaps to many parts of Gujarat, than to any other division of the Presidency, would be

to give the elective franchise to a certain number of persons from each of the principal castes in Municipal Cities and Towns. The numbers and names of individuals from each principal caste may be determined by a Committee of leading representative men in each electoral division. Caste organisation in Gujarat is so compact and well defined that it would not it seems to me, be difficult to select some of the most prominent representative castes and give a fixed number of the members of each caste the rights of Municipal voters,

the number of those to be returned by each *caste* to depend upon the general intelligence of the *caste* as a body, and its strength as a representative factor of the general body politic. In short, the tests I propose in addition to those laid down under seven heads in para 15 of Bombay Government's Resolution of September last are — (1) a house tax by itself wherever it exists, (2) a wheel tax under certain conditions, (3) a house property test under certain defined limits where there is no house-tax, and (4) representation by the principal castes.

48 The next most important question is as to whom should be given the power of electing Taluka Committees, and here too the proposals in para 17 of the Bombay Government's Resolution would appear to be open to the same objections as those just noticed. The Government of Bombay have decided that the right of election for Taluka Local Fund Committees should rest in the following persons —

(1) All persons holding or occupying land paying an annual Government assessment of not less than Rs. 15, (2) all officiating revenue or police patils.

Here all the tests enumerated under heads 1 to 7\* in para 15 are wanting. The absence of such tests lay the proposals open to a defect in the direction of calling "forth and rendering effective that desire and capacity for self government which all intelligent and fairly educated men may safely be assumed to possess"†. All the lessons which the past history of Local Boards in respect of misapplication of funds, of the five and seven years' budget systems, and of the virtual extinction of Local Self Government during Sir Richard Temple's rule over this Presidency, will have been learnt in vain if the proposed reconstitution of the Taluka and District Local Fund Committees excludes the very class of men whose presence at the Local Boards would be some guarantee to the people that the past painful history of their administration will not be repeated. A *Vakil per se* feels a

greater interest in a Local Fund road than a seller of *ghree*, or a dealer in cloth, because whereas the *ghree* seller and the cloth dealer know little and care still less to go out of the beaten path of their callings to know from what source the local road is made or what the Local Funds really are, or how they should be dealt with, the *Vakil*, by reason of his general education and intelligence, the interest he takes in such matters and the greater brain power he can bring to bear upon questions before him, is decidedly better qualified to vote for a fit person to

\* These tests are — (1) All Graduates of any University Indian or European (2) all Pleaders holding *sanads* granted by the High Court (3) all Licentiates of Medicine Surgery, and Civil Engineering (4) all jurors assessors and conciliators (5) all Government pensioners in receipt of a pension of not less than Rs. 50 monthly (6) all persons in Government service in receipt of a monthly salary not less than Rs. 30 (7) all persons paying the imperial licence tax of Rs. 20 per annum and upwards  
† Resolution of the Government of India of the 18th May last para 15



be returned to the Local Fund Committee than the trader or the shopkeeper. And since it is through the Taluka Boards that persons can become members of district Local Funds Committees, it would be a great pity if the knowledge and experience of the educated and professional classes in the country are not specially availed of in returning eligible members to the Taluka Board. Is the scheme of Local Self Government expected to succeed by means of a constituency of *ghee*-sellers, oil-vendors and cloth dealers and the return of uneducated and unintelligent men? If the possession of unencumbered real property in the taluka of the value of not less than Rs 1,000 or of other property worth not less than Rs 15,000 is to qualify a person to become a member of a Taluka Local Fund Committee, it is difficult to perceive why the rights of a Local Fund voter should be so circumscribed as to exclude the class of educated and intelligent men represented by *Vakils* and Graduates—the very class through whose instrumentality mainly it is that the Government of India hope to make the scheme of Local Self Government successful.

49 If it be contended that the object of the two tests laid down in para. 17

Objects intended by the Tests are not likely to be attained is to interest those persons chiefly who pay the Local Fund Cess, and others interested in village affairs, then I say that even this purpose is not answered by

the qualifications laid down. If I do not misunderstand the words, "all persons holding or occupying land paying an annual Government assessment of not less than Rs 48," I take them to mean that those are entitled to exercise the franchise who make a direct payment to Government of not less than Rs 48 a year in the shape of assessment on their lands. Whether this annual Government assessment includes quit rents, in the shape of *joh* in the Deccan (which is often one third of the demand on Government lands,) and *satima* in Gujarat is not quite clear. But supposing that it does, still I submit, the proposal is as unsound and unfair in principle as it would ordinarily be found to be unworkable in practice. It is unsound because it makes an item of imperial revenue a test of qualification

The first proposal unsound in principle and unworkable in practice in matters of local taxation, especially, when a Local Cess actually exists as a ready test. It is unfair to the taxpayer, because it virtually excludes the bulk of the

representatives, if not the whole, of the large and influential class of alienated landholders in the Presidency. It must be remembered that the bases of local taxation in this Presidency are Local and Municipal Funds. If Municipal elections are to be determined by the voice of municipal ratepayers, it stands to reason that elections for Local Fund Committees should be determined equally by the voice of the local cesspayers and not by the vote of those who pay the imperial land revenue. There should not be one kind of test for Municipal elections and a totally dissimilar test for Local Fund elections. Against this view it may be urged that those who pay the imperial land assessment pay also the Local Fund cess. On every rupee of assessment paid to the imperial land revenue the law imposes a cess of one anna for Local Funds. This is true enough, and is fully

admitted, but the conversion of the proposition does not hold good. And it is here, I believe, that the proposal is defective. It is true that every person who

Imperial assessment an unfair test in matters of local taxation pays assessment on his land pays also, and at the same time, the one-anna Local Cess, but it is not true, at least it is not always the case, that he who pays the

Local Cess necessarily pays the land assessment. As remarked above, a very large class of alienated landholders, known as Inamdars, Vajeezadars, Watandars, holders of Dewasthan, Dharmadary and Birkhali lands, pay the cess in almost every taluka of the Presidency. Their lands are wholly or partially exempt from the payment of the Government assessment, but they nevertheless have been subjected, under section 7 of the Local Fund Act, to pay the one anna cess for every rupee of the land revenue to which their lands would be assessable, if they were Government lands. For instance, an Inamdar holds 20 acres of land assessed by the survey department at, say, Rs. 4 per acre. On this land the Inamdar pays a Local Fund cess of Rs. 5, calculated at one anna per rupee on the full assessment of Rs. 80. He also pays a quit rent or summary

settlement of, say, Rs. 10. But, because he does not pay an annual Government assessment of Rs. 48 and upwards, he becomes disenfranchised. On the other hand, an ordinary cultivator, paying the equivalent of a

Exclusion of the important class of alienated landholders from the rights of suffrage

Local Cess of Rs. 3, in the full assessment of Rs. 48, is entitled to the franchise. There are many Inamdars and holders of what are called Birkhali lands in Gujarat, who pay individually to Government, on account of Local Funds, sums exceeding Rs. 3 that is to say, from Rs. 3 to Rs. 40 and upwards, representing a land assessment of from Rs. 48 to Rs. 640 and upwards, but they all become disqualified for votes under the provision laid down by Government. It seems to me that, instead of making Rs. 48 as the standard of qualification for a vote, the course more expedient and evidently fair to all parties, as also open to least objection, would be to make the payment of a Local Fund Cess of Rs. 3 a year (which represents a payment of land revenue at Rs. 48) as the qualifying test for a vote in the case of a Taluka Local Fund Committee. It is in the change of this standard of qualification for the suffrage from the Local Cess to the imperial assessment that the real sting of the iniquity of the proposal lies. If this sting is not removed, the adhesion to the standard of land assessment is open to the very objection which it is the object of the proposal to avoid. In para. 17 of the Bombay Government's Resolution we are told that "if the franchise is to be given at all, it should be granted generously and unfettered by the conditions which render it beyond the reach of the vast mass of respectable rate payers." But this is the very thing which the proposed test fails to do. The condition with which the test is clogged excludes from the benefit of the franchise an appreciable portion of a most respectable class of alienated landholders who, under the previous Government, and during the early period of British rule in this Presidency, rendered valuable services to Government, who were looked upon as the



Members of Local Fund Committees will doubtless have much to travel in their district than those of Municipal Boards. Accordingly, the scale of remuneration should be higher in the case of Local Fund Boards than in that of Municipal Boards, regard being had to the nature of the work. I may venture to suggest that Rs. 15 to the Chairman of the Local Fund Committee and Rs. 10 to the Members of that body, while Rs. 10 to the Chairman and Rs. 5 to the Members of Municipal Boards for each meeting, cannot be considered a very high scale of remuneration, the number of meetings in a month for attendance at which they are entitled to fees being fixed. A fair remuneration for trouble should under no circumstance be grudged. The fee should be such as to offer a fair inducement.

53 I now come to the courtesy titles of Rao Bahadur and Khan Bahadur,

Courtesy Titles which the Government of India recommend shall be applied to Native members of all Local Boards during the

term of their office, "with a view to stimulating the candidature of men of respectable standing in Native society and to mark the importance of the functions of these Local Boards in the eyes of the Government." The Bombay Government, however, object to the proposal and do not wish that "titles which have hitherto been highly valued, rarely bestowed and only earned after years of assiduous and successful labour in the service of Government, should be scattered broadcast over the land."† Now, without going into the question whether the free and generous bestowal of such titles as 'Rao Sahib' and 'Rao Bahadur' on Native gentlemen in every department of the public service has not of late years diminished materially the value with which, at one time, they were regarded in Native society, it may be said that, on the principle that a rose would smell equally well under another name, those who work solely from a high sense of duty and personal responsibility, perhaps scarcely need the stimulus of a courtesy title to induce them to persevere in their work, but it will be readily granted, I think, that even in the best community such stoical, high souled persons are exceptions and not the rule, that the world is differently constituted, and that the generality of mortals are weak enough to need some such encouragement as is proposed by the Government of India to be bestowed to show the esteem in which the office of a Member of Local Boards is held by Government. It is true that generally Mamlukdars and Subordinate Judges, except those of the highest class, now only possess the honorary titles of Rao Sahib and Khan Sahib, but to say that men considered eligible for the post of Chairmen of Town Municipalities or Taluka Committees would, as a rule, be men of lower status, inferior education, less ability and smaller means, would be, in my opinion, to do scant justice to a class of deserving men simply because they happen not to have taken to Government service, but have carved out independent careers for themselves. But, when it is remembered that the Taluka Boards are the channels through which, in the proposed reconstitution of the district Local

\* Government of India Resolution of the 18th May 1887 para 16

† Bombay Government Resolution of the 19th September 1887

19th September last, afford perhaps the most indubitable proof\* of the truth of what has been advanced in this Note as to the quite nominal character of the functions of the present Local Boards. This radical defect of the present system can only be removed by withholding from the local Government the power proposed to be given in para 17 of the Government of India's Resolution of the 18th May. The local Government's sanction should be necessary in case of new taxes or of new loan, and it should have power to set aside the action of the Local Boards only where such action tends to cause a breach of the public peace and where it is likely to cause serious danger to public health†. Beyond this the Local Boards should be left pretty much to manage their own affairs.

52 It now remains to look back to the ground already travelled over. We have seen with what zeal and alacrity the several local

Summary of the Principal Points of this Note

Governments have seconded the proposals of the Government of India's scheme of Local Self Government. We have noted the half-heartedness with which the Bombay Government have approached the subject. There would have been some ground for the attitude assumed by the Bombay Government in regard to the extension of powers to Local Boards if the past history of Local Fund and Municipal Administration warranted it. That history, however, shows that Local Funds have been administered in this Presidency, during the last twenty years, very much on the principle of everything for the people and nothing by them, that one of the chief objects aimed at in the original scheme of Sir Bartle Frere, namely, that of giving the representatives of the cess payers an influential voice in the disposal of the funds, was kept in the background, the district Collector and the Executive Engineer having pretty much disposed of the funds as best suited them, that in the end the voice of the district Collector was drowned in the all powerful cry of the P. W. D., and the almost exclusive control which the Department has exercised over Local Fund expenditure, that Local Fund money, intended for works of local utility, was divorced from its original objects and misapplied to works the cost of which should properly have been borne by imperial or provincial revenue, that from the time this policy began to reign supreme

\* "The latter (Taluka Committee) at present have it may be said, hardly any power to spend money for they have virtually no money to spend. The district is the chief spending body, the great bulk of the local fund income is expended by it, but it too in many respects, possesses but a mere nominal authority and direction. Its members may have and may express an opinion as to the way in which the funds available can be laid down to advantage for the benefit of the district, but in practice the decision, more especially of late years, has rested with the Commissioner of the Division and the Government and it may be taken for granted that in many instances the orders passed and the works undertaken are not those which the Native members would have sanctioned had the power of determining the question vested in them. The seven years' budget system means the triumph of the big works and long roads policy. \* \* \* Hence have arisen dissatisfactions on the part of many officers much discontent on the part of committees and cess payers, and the idea for which there has been too much ground that the taluka Committees were powerless, and therefore useless."

† See on this and many other points an able and thoughtful paper on Local Self Government in the Bombay Presidency the Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajana Sabha for October 1894.

imperial or provincial expenditure on district and provincial roads and communications have begun to show a steady fall, its place having been taken by Local Funds, that the Government of Sir Philip Wodehouse set its face against the mischievous effects of the non localisation policy, that the greatest offender in the work of misapplication of Local Funds in the Bombay Presidency was his successor, Sir Richard Temple, that, during his time, most radical and revolutionary measures were carried out under his orders, whereby Local Funds were not only drawn upon for district and provincial roads, but even for famine works, the cost of which ought clearly to have been borne by the imperial exchequer, that the result of such measures was doubtless to earn for Sir Richard Temple some temporary credit from the then Government of India for having economically carried out a famine relief policy, but to the district Local Fund Committees on whose reserves the inroads were made, the measures proved disastrous, inasmuch as they brought down the balances of many of them to the starvation point. This was not enough. They drove the Committees to incur debts in the shape of heavy loans, for the repayment of which, with interest thereon, the Local Fund revenues were mortgaged for twenty, thirty, and, in some cases, fifty years. The system of five and of seven years' budgets afforded unusual facilities for such measures, and the ultimate result of them all was to bring about a complete demoralization of the system of Local Funds in this Presidency. As regards district municipal administration, the work of the past twenty years shows that where, as in the case of Surat and other Municipalities, greater freedom was given to non-official members to work out their part, the results have shown the capacity of the Natives for managing their affairs. And thus Lord Ripon's present proposals for the extension of the powers of Local Boards aim at little more than carrying out the measures with reference to this Presidency, which Sir Bartle Frere contemplated in regard to Local Funds, and what the Hon. Mr. Hope carried out on a restricted scale in respect of municipal administration in Surat.

53 In considering practical proposals, we have seen that the taluka should be once more made the unit of local administration, that it would not be desirable to extend the principle of election to all Towns as well as City Municipalities alike, but to confine the working of it, for the present, to City Municipalities and a few of the Town Municipalities only, that, as regards non official Chairmen of City Municipalities, there need be no question as to the possibility of obtaining suitable men, that, in regard to non official Chairmen of district Local Fund Committees it may be hoped that each district will be able to furnish eligible men for the office, that as to methods of elections and qualifications of electors, no uniform system for all districts will answer, but that such methods should be adopted and such tests laid down as would suit the circumstances of each district and the modes of taxation at present in force, that in regard to municipal elections, the provision as to Rs 5 direct Municipal taxes would be found unworkable in actual practice, that the course most expedient to take in the matter would be to make the basis of the house-tax and the wheel tax as you find them, and lay down

your tests accordingly, that a house property tax would be a suitable test where no house-tax exists, and that a certain number of representatives of the principal castes in Gujarat may have the rights of election given them. As regards qualifications for Local Fund electors, the payment of Rs. 48 as annual Government assessment on land by no means constitutes a valid, fair, and workable test, since it would appear to exclude a large number of alienated landholders in the Presidency who are largely interested in the right expenditure of Local Funds, that it is on all accounts desirable that the Chairmen and Members of the Managing Committees of Municipal as well as Local Fund Boards should be remunerated by fees, that the withholding of the courtesy titles of Rao Bahadur and Khan Bahadur from Chairmen and Members of the Managing Committees of Local Boards would be to them a positive discouragement, and at times offer practical difficulties in the way of the acceptance of the offices by pensioners of Government who had such titles when in active service and others who do not consider themselves at all inferior in point of education, ability or social status to Mamlatdars and Subordinate Judges.

54 The idea of practically carrying out a scheme of extended powers to

Boldness of Lord Ripon in practically giving extended powers to Local Boards.

local bodies in every part of the British Indian Empire although perhaps not new, is certainly bold. It implies no ordinary risk to the political reputation of a statesman in the position of the Viceroy of India. Members of the Indian Civil Service have, as a rule, shown too high a respect for constituted authority to offer open opposition to any great administrative reform, but their opposition is none the less strong on that account, and it must call forth on the part of the Viceroy all the resources of high courage, bred of deep convictions as to the permanent soundness of the measure, to overcome that opposition. It is worthy of note that so long as questions relating to the rights of the Natives of India to a larger share in the administration of their country are mere matters of theoretical speculations and discussions, and confined to minutes, resolutions, and speeches, the capacity and fitness of Natives for the exercise of higher administrative func-

Where does the real conflict in practical administration begin?

tions are acknowledged in the blandest of terms, but let the Anglo-Indian administrator descend from the sublime heights of theory to the level of practical action and let the questions seriously resolve themselves into the matter of fact issues of 'give' and 'take', and it is there that all the stern realities of an *esprit de corps* present themselves to one's view as if in battle array. For illustration of this remark, one has only to refer in detail to the reports from the districts of this Presidency, which contain the deliberate opinions of officers "who from their general ability, their long experience, their acquaintance with the views, modes of thought, and habits of all classes of the population and their official intercourse with all sections of the community are peculiarly qualified to give valuable and sound advice on so important and difficult a subject." To a bystander nothing

can be more disappointing than to see a body of thoughtful and educated men, thus described, 'respectfully' deprecating the instincts in this Presidency made the subjects of experiment in political and popular education, and in doing so wholly ignoring the results of the operations of progressive institutions in other parts of the world, and refusing to believe in the effects of the civilizing influences at work in this country, while feeling secure in the idea that divisions and dissensions among the various races and nationalities of India are a source of security or strength to England. They seem to ignore the fact that new forces are springing up around them which must work their way, that one effect of education has been to cement closer the bonds of union among the different communities in India. There is more of fellow-feeling and sympathy at present among races widely differing in habits, customs and religion than there ever was before. Hindus, Mahomedans and Parsis all show how they can join in a legitimate common cause. Politics and political questions are studied with greater attention. The Press has been a powerful lever in the spread of intelligence and opinion. Thoughtful politicians and statesmen in England, and observant officials in India, see that there is something in indigenous opinion that Government would do well to direct its attention to. As intelligence and education spread those forces which impart vitality to people in other countries infuse fresh energy among the advanced classes of Natives here, and their vitality begins to grow and permeate throughout different channels to society in general. The changes which the action of these forces have produced in the thoughts and feelings of the people in the course of a generation cannot

Duty of the British Government in India—to raise the national character of the people.

be ignored by observant Englishmen. Above all, it becomes their bounden duty, as a civilised and civilising power, to raise the national character of the people whose destinies are placed by Providence under their charge.

"It is not enough," says Sir Thomas Munro, "that we confer on the Natives the benefits of just laws and of moderate taxation, unless we endeavour to raise their character, but under a foreign Government there are so many causes which tend to depress it that it is not easy to prevent it from sinking. It is an old observation that he who loses his liberty, loses half his virtue. This is true of nations as well as of individuals." \* And so it happens that the proposals of even a sagacious Viceroy meet with hostile criticism, because they recognise this duty, because the decided departure from established practice and the so-called vested interests which such proposals involve is rendered necessary by the growth of the people of India in intelligence, and by the exigencies of the public service which call for some relief to the over-worked official. But who knows that all which Lord Ripon has been doing and promises to do during the period of his Indian Viceroyalty may not be undone by his successor? The changeableness of Indian administration has of late become proverbial. Under

\* I have selected from the Minutes and other official writings of Major General Sir Thomas Munro Bart. K.C.B. Governor of Madras edited by Sir Alexander G. Arbuthnot, B.C.S.I., C.I.E., Vol. II page 323.



a personal Government in India the character of the Viceroy determines, in a measure, the character of his reign. In this respect Lord Lytton and Lord Ripon have offered a complete contrast. Lord Ripon has reached the heart of the nation and made them forget the high handed measures of the late Viceroy. His Lordship has shown that there is a brighter and, to the people of India more hopeful side to British statesmanship. But who can feel sure of the continuity of Lord Ripon's policy, if bureaucratic opinion should happen to gain strength during the reign of His Excellency's successor, and be powerful enough to pull down the proud structure which he has been attempting to rear up at immense cost of time, trouble, and reputation?

55 And hence it becomes the bounden duty of every educated and intelligent

Duties of Educated and  
Intelligent Natives

Native of India to do his part to ensure the permanent success of the experiment. Lord Ripon has done his part in the work of rousing the national character of the people

of India. Well may His Excellency repeat to the people of India what he said in

Noble Words of Lord  
Ripon

his Lahore speech the other day. Gentlemen, it seems to me then, that in this matter the Government have

done their part. We have laid down our policy, your Lieutenant Governor has

heartily accepted it, and I am sure that he will be supported by those who are

subordinate to him in this Province. It remains, therefore in the Punjab as in

the rest of India, for the people to do their part, it remains for you, gentle-

men, men of influence and education, to come forward in answer to the call of

Government and take your proper place in the administration of the country.

It remains for you to say whether this policy is to be attended with success or

failure. I do not doubt that the appeal made to you will be adequately an-

swered on your part. It is needless to say that these earnest words of the

Viceroy, so pathetically uttered at the Lahore Durbar, will go home to the breast

of every native throughout the length and breadth of India who wishes well of

his country. What is wanted is an intelligent, unselfish, steady interest in the

work of Local Self Government on the part of the educated, the influential, and

the richer classes. This interest may manifest itself in a variety of ways. It may,

for instance, be shown by assisting the local authorities in the district or at the

Presidency by way of practical suggestions as to the best mode in which really

good men may be obtained for the work of Local Boards, men whose education

and character should be some guarantee as to their fitness, who will not shrink

from work or duty, who will prove true to themselves

and who are sensible of the responsibilities of their

duties. To return such men should be the great object

of every well wisher of this country. In this respect

What practical action ne-  
cessary for the success of  
the scheme?

no better advice need be offered than that which has been offered by Mr A O Hume in his most admirable and sympathetic letter to the Natives of India

'If throughout the country says he "during the coming year any considerable frac-  
tion even of the educated and wealthy classes will show, in practice a sincere interest in Local

Self Government, if they, dis regarding the trouble and the interruption to their own business and pleasure work steadily and intelligently at public affairs, organizing elections so as to secure the best men everywhere, for the work, regardless of their own personal advancement, or if when elected, they will zealously and uprightly discharge the duties falling to their lot without fear or favour, if they will put before them day and night the fact that their country will be on its trial, and that their success or failure will be *pro tanto* the honour or disgrace of India, if, in a word, they will show that they really are men good and true and not mere precocious children incapable of sustained effort and noble aims, another year will not elapse without further important developments in the direction of self government nor another decade without a bloodless social revolution for which many trials have long waited but which none, until quite recently, have ever dared to look for as a practical possibility.\*

36 There is no doubt that at the outset of their career Local Boards will have a very difficult task before them. For want of practical insight into the details of administrative work they will be likely to stumble now and then. Until they acquire experience of their work they will certainly need all the help and all the sympathetic advice which trained officials, friendly to the cause, can give. To this end it is desirable, I think, that a Special Commissioner for carrying out the

Government of India's scheme of Local Self Government should be appointed by our Government. His duties would be more those of a practical director or adviser to Local Fund and Municipal Boards in the Presidency. He would be the interpreter of the views and policy of the Government on the one hand and of the senti-

Necessity for the appointment of a Special Commissioner to carry out the scheme of Local Self Government in the Bombay Presidency

ments of Local Boards on the other. He will put the Local Boards in the way of their work, advise them what to do and what to avoid. He will be their constant referee on all knotty points relating to elections, to eligible voters for electors, and to the objects to which Local Funds and Municipal revenues may be legitimately devoted. He will also represent the views of Local Boards to Government and advise what may best be done. The salary of this officer should be met, partly by Government and, partly, by contributions from Local Board, Municipal as well as Local Fund. If the services of such a Commissioner cost, say, half a lakh of rupees a year, the cost will be amply repaid by the smoothness or absence of friction with which the entire machinery for Local Self Government will be set agoing to him. The Local Fund Committee will cheerfully bear their portion of the charge, seeing that the intervention of the Special Commissioner will offer a chance of saving their Funds from further encroachments for extraneous work, while Municipal Boards cannot fail to be benefited by the advice of the Special Commissioner. If this proposal commands itself to our Government and to the Government of India, then for the post of this Special

Commissioner for this Presidency, no worthier name can be put forward than that of Sir William Wedderburn, Bart., the present Judge of the district Court of Poona. His intimate knowledge of the people

Sir William Wedderburn Bart. in reply to the first of the five Special Commissioners

\* Mr. A. O. Hume's letter to the Natives of India is so admirable in tone and to the point in every respect that I have preferred to give it entire in an Appendix to this Note.

of this Presidency, his broad and catholic views, the judicial calmness he invariably brings to bear in the treatment of all questions touching the welfare of the people, his strong common sense, the sympathy and confidence he enjoys of the educated and intelligent classes, all point to Sir William Wedderburn as the officer eminently fitted for the initiation of the Local Self Government scheme in this Presidency. It is not too much to say that half the difficulty of the task would be overcome by the tact and diligence which this officer would show in the performance of his duty.

57 The Bombay Government might also help the cause of the new Local Boards by leaving it optional to its native judicial officers in the districts to take part in the work of Local Boards. Against this proposal it may be urged that the

Desirability of enabling the co-operation of Native judicial officers in the work of Local Boards

Sah Judges cannot take part in their work by reason of their office. In the exercise of their judicial duties it is possible they may have to try cases to which the Local Boards may be parties. To this it may be replied

that such cases, which are, practically speaking, few and far between, may be transferred without inconvenience to suitors to the file of a neighbouring Civil Court. Considering the knowledge and experience which judicial officers may be expected to bring to the Local Boards, the advice they may be enabled to offer cannot fail to be most valuable, and would more than compensate for the small inconvenience to which a most limited number of suitors might occasionally be put.

58 It may be hoped that much will be done to advance the cause of Local Self Government during the Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, and though, as Mr Hume remarks, others will reap the fruit and glory of his unselfish labours, yet this much at least may be admitted that already the reforms introduced by Lord Ripon in the domestic policy of India have gone far to achieve one solid result, namely—They

Stability of British Power in India placed on a firmer basis

have put the stability of the Indian Empire for the next fifty years on a basis of firmness to which the country had been a stranger for some years past. This one

solid achievement—the result, doubtless, of many concomitant causes—ought to constitute the glory of Lord Ripon's reign in India. England's power over India, though based upon physical force, rests, in the long run, on the general good opinion of the people. This good opinion the Government cannot seek too assiduously to cultivate. While the rulers of India have their physical power, natives of India have their empire of opinion. "If," as Mr Chaplin observes, "it be just to suppose that a government of strangers, who have come from a distance of half the globe, notwithstanding every wish to conciliate, must still be felt as irksome if not degrading, our own interests, if not those of humanity, should dictate to us the propriety of contributing all we can towards maintaining that empire of opinion, which, as far as respects our power, our justice, and our moderation, is acknowledged to be the main support of our administration." The

strength of this empire of opinion was not disregarded in times past. The present generation of officials may not think much of it, but Anglo Indian administrators of the stamp and character of Elphinstone, Malcolm, Munro, the two Lawrences, and others who have had to do with the foundation and preservation of British power in India, and who enjoyed unusual opportunities of forming their own opinions of Native character, have looked upon the good opinion of the Natives of India as of vital importance to the stability of the Empire.

39 It is not at the Presidency Town or at the head quarters of the district and genius of Opinion Collector that you get at the real opinion of the bulk of where to be looked for? the people of India or gauge their thoughts, you have to see them at the village *chowni*, where the "Council of Elders" meets together, and where, in the staple gossip which amuse them, the 'Sarkar' comes in for a pretty large share of their praise or blame. It is not the Viceroy of India, the Governor or the Lieutenant Governor of the Presidency, nor yet the Commissioner of the Division, nor the district Collector, but the Village Accountant and the Taluka Mamlatdar who are to the masses the representatives of that entity commonly called the Sarkar, and according as their acts are good or bad so does the Sarkar come in for a share of the praise or blame. But whether it is praise or blame, it is the praise or blame of children for their parents. The Sarkar is still looked upon as the *ma bap* of the people. This theory of paternal government remains intact to this day amidst all the changes and revolutions which have come over the country. To say that the discontent or blame of a certain section of the people at the Presidency or in Cities and Towns portends political danger is to do a serious wrong to the generally peaceful, and loyal character of the great bulk of the people of India. Even in the case of this so-called 'discontented' class it will often be found, when the causes of such alleged discontent are closely scanned that there is a substratum of truth in the grievances which have led to unfavorable allegations and that it is either some unwise measure, or a studied disregard to deeply rooted prejudices or convictions of the people by an official that has given rise to expressions of bitter disappointment. It may be confidently asserted that there is nothing like active dislike or hostility to the British Government felt by any section of the Native population. We need not be surprised if politicians of the stamp of Sir Richard Temple looking at the mere surface of affairs, should indulge in vagaries, and in attempting to classify the people according to the degrees of their loyalty, should most erroneously class the educated natives, the native aristocracy in the British territories and the Hindu and Mohammedan priesthood as those who are in a 'fitful mood' and add that 'some of them are to be counted as undoubtedly inimical.' But Lord Ripon has solved the problem of the alleged disloyalty and discontent of the educated and other classes, and has in the short space of two years, shown how ill it will serve a class as the criterion. That being the case this measure of Local

Self Government which comes home to the people and touches the domestic side of their life, cannot but be hailed by the urban and rural population of India as a blessing

60 This Note has been written under many disadvantages, the chief of which is the want of access to official papers bearing upon the past history and statistics of Local Fund and Municipal Administration in this Presidency. It is believed, however, that the points herein sought to be impressed upon the reader will find illustrations in every district of this Presidency. If every district Collector had followed the plan upon which the Hon Mr Hope worked out municipal self-government in Surat, reviewed each year's work and published an annual report of the same, containing all needful information upon it, much would have been known concerning municipal administration in this Presidency. And the same may be said of Local Fund administration. Now that increased attention will have to be paid to such subjects, I take leave to suggest, as a powerful means of educating the non official public in Local Self Government, that all papers likely to impart useful information to the public on Local Self Government—from the Resolutions of the Bombay Government down to the reports and reviews of Local Boards by Government officials and minutes on important questions by non official members—be published in one of the Supplements to the *Bombay Government Gazette*, which may thus be rendered as interesting to the public as the Supplement to the *Gazette of India* is at present, and sold to the public at a moderate charge

61 And here I conclude this Note, imperfect as it confessedly is. In doing so let us hope that Lord Ripon's Scheme of Local Self Government may, even during the period of his Viceroyalty, take such deep roots in the soil of India as to inspire the author of the reform with confidence and hope that this tender plant of political education will grow up to a tree, throw out umbrageous branches and yield delicious fruits, that the success of the present limited Scheme of Local Self Government will lead, in course of time to its extension to local Legislative Councils—an extension so necessary to the completeness of the scheme as a whole, that the 18th of May, 1882, may be looked back to and celebrated by

Hope expressed that the 18th of May may be celebrated every year by the People of India as a National Holiday in remembrance of the date of Lord Ripon's Resolution on Local Self Government

the people of India and their children's children like one of their annual social festivals, as an auspicious day,—a day of joy in the political Annals of this country, when one of the noblest and wisest of the many noble and wise Resolutions of his Government was penned by one of the most sagacious, liberal minded and sympathetic Viceroys that India has seen,—the worthy successor of Canning, Mayne and Lawrence—whose nomination to the exalted office of the Representative of Her Britannic Majesty in India has shown the instinctive statesmanship and wisdom of Mr Gladstone, and has

gratified the hearts of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in this country. Let the voice of the millions of India unite in petitions to the Queen-Empress of India for a renewed lease of power to Lord Ripon on the expiry of its present

Petitions for fresh Lease of Power to Lord Ripon and prayers for his health and happiness term,—in the interests alike of the stability of the Indian Empire as in those of the perfection of the noble schemes now being initiated throughout the length and breadth of the country,—and in prayers to the Almighty Providence for health and happiness to one who has already established manifold claims on the gratitude of the people and won their hearts, but whose sole personal desire is to be remembered and regarded as the TRUE FRIEND OF THE PEOPLE OF INDIA.

JAVERILÁL UMIASHANKAR YAJNIK,

President of the Central Committee in Bombay  
for Promoting Local Self Government in Gujarát.

105, Dady Setl's Agray Lane,  
Bombay, the 7th of November, 1882.

# APPENDIX TO THE NOTE.

## MR. A. O. HUME ON LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN INDIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "PIONEER"

SIR,—At the present moment, when the question of Local Self Government is engrossing the attention of all educated persons in India, capable of fully realizing all that this really means, and all that must necessarily follow from it, I shall, I trust, be pardoned if I offer a few remarks on the subject, even though these are addressed almost exclusively to the Native community.

It is impossible for me to write to a tenth of the Native papers, or to reply directly to all the communications that reach me through various channels. The *Pioneer* is unquestionably the most widely circulated journal in India, and I can only write to that paper in the hope that other newspapers may (some of them) reproduce my letter.

Signs of impatience are here and there being manifested, things do not move quickly or smoothly as many expected and wished, here and there people are beginning to ask whether this Local Self Government scheme, is, after all, only another of the grandiloquent English official shams, with which the records of the past bristle, "a tale of little meaning, though the works are strong," specious promises, never intended to be kept beyond a fair seeming.

My dear Indian friends, in all such matters of Statecraft, too many of you are really still with all your high education, all your noble aspirations, utterly impractical, and little better than children.

Do, please, try and realize the position of affairs, do you suppose that a Viceroy now-a-days is an autocrat, one who can say *sic volo, sic jubeo*? On the contrary, never was any poor mortal loaded with similar terrible responsibilities, fettered to an equal degree, by the network of pre-existing circumstances in which he finds himself suddenly plunged on his appointment.

It was not always so. Thirty five years ago this network, to a Governor General like Lord Dalhousie, was but a silken veil, severed in a moment by the sword of revolution, but now the strands have stiffened into the best iron wire rope.

Gulliver, bound by the Lilliputians, is now the fittest symbol of a Viceroy: every department, every subordinate Government has a cord upon him somewhere, the hydra-headed India Office has wound its cables round him in snaky folds till he stands an official Laocoon, and one single resolute Member of Council at home suffices to frustrate all his best considered plans even when these are backed by the concurrence of every high official in India.

What do people expect? Is Lord Ripon to effect with one wave of his pen (the modern magician's wand) what it will take all the best men in the country, labouring unselfishly with hand and heart, a generation or more to bring about?

It is simply childish to express, or even feel impatience in a vast matter like this, because the seed, as yet barely sown, has not yielded the great tree we yearn for, bearing flowers and fruit.

Even were all powers, here and at home, favourable to the Viceroy's noble scheme for raising our political status, he would hardly, safely and wisely, do more than he has already done, *et sowing the seed carefully*.

But, as a matter of fact, all the powers are not on our side, open, honest, manly opposition to what one disapproves, once the boast of the Indian Civil Service, has, since Lord Mayo's "strong and kindly hand," stiffened in death, ceased to be a characteristic of the Indian administrator, but all who can read between the lines can see plainly enough that a large proportion of those in power here are far from radically endorsing Lord Ripon's truly statesmanlike views on this great question. Theoretically, they would mostly concede the point: but they would, by every possible ploy, of prematurity, of desiring to see a gradual growth, &c., evade an immediate practical initiation of the system.

At home, it is the same or worse. The majority of the Council certainly look with no friendly eye upon this resolute new departure, new, not indeed so far as words and professions go, but new in the determination to give *bona fide* practical effect to these.

No position can be more difficult than that of our reformer. He has to move with the greatest circumspection and deliberation: he dare not stimulate progress, a single marked *fiasco* any where might discredit and ruin all his projects, he dare not press on impatiently in face of the widespread opposition that exists here and at home, or the angry feelings thus generated, though perhaps impotent for the moment, would ensare a recoil under the succeed.

ing administration that would sweep away all traces of his labour. True, by more vigorous and energetic personal efforts he might produce for the moment startling effects and win a great name, but the thing would have no root. It would be like the seed fallen in stony ground, sure to wither before the hot blasts of the hostile criticism to which it would be inevitably subjected in the very next reign. Surely the see-saw of Indian officialdom is no secret to any educated Indian. Surely every such man must understand that, for one who really has at heart a great moral and political reform like this, for one who, careless of his own name and fame, seeks only the good of his fellows, and their unborn children and children's children, there is nothing for it but to sow widely and deeply, silently and patiently, slowly but surely, and leave the good seed mainly to its own development.

It is no breach of confidence on my part, no longer an official, to say that this last paragraph truly embodies, I believe, Lord Ripon's sentiments. He is most anxious to do for us, in all ways, all that India's noblest sons, all that her truest friends can hope for or desire, but he is an experienced statesman, he realizes the conditions, and he wants to make whatever little advance he can achieve permanent—

"Broad based upon the people's hearts,"

and he will not risk a failure that might be fatal to our best hopes for another generation, by any high handed disregard of opposing prejudices of any enthusiastic effort to crowd into one Viceroyalty what *must* be the gradual growth of many.

Others will reap the fruit and glory of his unselfish labours, but India, if true to herself, will never forget who, mid "this winter of our discontent" sowed the good seed.

If, after this clear explanation, complaints such as I have lately too often heard continue to crop up, they will go far to strengthen the position of those who hold (and I doubt not conscientiously) that India is still unfit for any measure of Self Government.

But if, instead of finding fault with the slowness with which we seem to advance, we were one and all to strive zealously to second our good friend's beneficent designs, it might well be that the movement might acquire a rapidly growing momentum, and that, even before he leaves us, he might see some early fruits of his benevolent labours.

He has really done his part—for the moment he can do little more—the rest lies neither with friends nor opponents, but with ourselves.

As I write, a letter reaches me from one of the ablest of our native journalists. He says—"Our countrymen are generally most selfish. This selfishness is the bane of our country. Everyone is for himself, no one for others. There are patriots, no doubt amongst us, but there are few purely *unselfish* patriots. What our country most needs at this moment is *unselfish patriotism*. We want men who will subordinate their own personal interests to those of the community, who will disregard titles and honours, who will try to be, and not merely to seem, and who will be prepared to make any reasonable sacrifice for the good of India. Until such men are born amongst us (a very few such would, by their noble example lighten the whole mass), there seem to me but scant hopes of our making any real and substantial progress."

To me these seem to be very true words. If throughout the country, during this coming year, any considerable fraction even of the educated and wealthy classes will show, in practice, a sincere interest in local self government, if they, disregarding the trouble and the interruption to their own business and pleasure, work steadily and intelligently at public affairs, organizing elections so as to secure the best men, everywhere, for the work, regardless of their own personal advancement, or if, when elected, they will zealously and up-to-the-day and night the fact that their country will be on its trial, and that their success or failure will be *pro tanto* the honour or disgrace of India, if in a word, they will show that they really are men, good and true and not mere precocious children, incapable of sustained effort and noble aims, another year will not elapse without further important developments in the direction of self government nor another decade without a bloodless social revolution for which many true hearts have long yearned but which none, until quite recently, have ever dared to look for as a practical possibility.

My friends, the game is in our own hands, the ball is at your feet, and the question is, "What will you do with it?" Alas! even those who love you best, who are yours, whether you sink or swim, await the result of the ordeal with anxiety and uncertainty.